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SPECIAL **DEFENDERS** ISSUE

FOOM

STAN LEE
publisher

DAVID KRAFT
writer/editor

JIM SALICRUP
power behind the throne

SOL BRODSKY
mr. nice guy

MARIE SEVERIN
foom fatale

GEORGE PEREZ
JOE SINNOTT
cover artists

STEVE GERBER
ARCHIE GOODWIN
JACK KIRBY
ROGER SLIFER
ROY THOMAS
LEN WEIN
MARV WOLFMAN
consulting editors

ZIGGY STARDUST
minister of inFOOMation

NORA MACLIN & DAK
design

LENNY GROW
production

DONNA COE
dynamic damsel

HOWIE BENDER
MARY ELLEN BEVERIDGE
DAN CRESPI
MARTHA CONWAY
JO DUFFY
SCOTT EDELMANIMAL
DANNY FINGEROTH
ED HANNIGAN
DAVIDA LICHTER-DALE
LARRY LIEBER
MARY MAC
RALPH MACCHIO
NANCY MURPHY
JIM NOVAK
PATY
DIANE RODRIGO
JOHN ROMITA
JOHN ROMITA, JR.
JIM SHOOTER
BOB STARRETT
STERNO
WARREN STOROB
LINDA TAXEL
JOHN VERPOORTEN
DUFFY VOHLAND
and the whole
blamed bullpen

friends of ol' marvel

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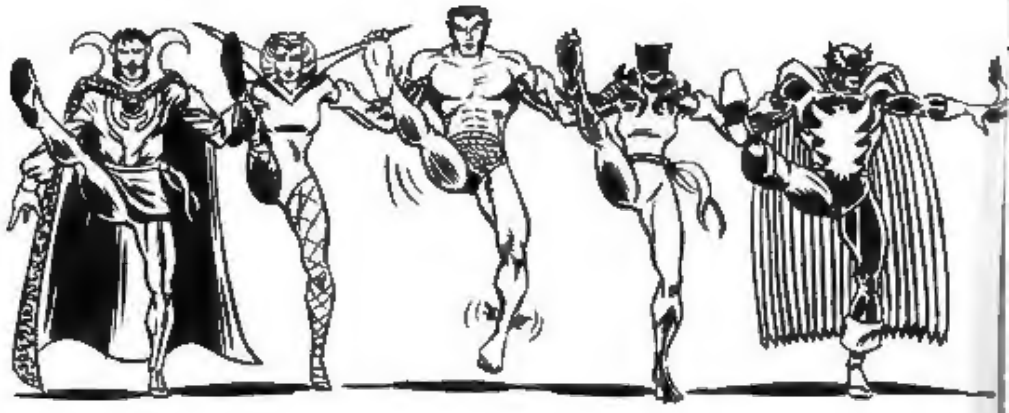
de DUDE, de FOOM



Part 1: *de Dude*

The life of a self-styled creative genius in this last quarter of the Twentieth Century is, from a strictly personal point of view, sometimes startingly mundane (and yet, at the same time, absurdly romantic, in the classical sense of the word). For instance, to point up the contrast between the romantic and the routine, the image and the actuality, I am currently sitting in the Green Kitchen restaurant on the corner of my block, eating pastrami and baked beans while at the same time writing this editorial for the popular culture periodical, FOOM.

Admittedly, not exactly as Bohemian as a discussion about artistic integrity among a group of struggling would-be *auteurs* at a sidewalk cafe in the Montmartre, but not bad as a simultaneous symbollic satisfaction of both the physical and the aesthetic needs of modern-day mechanized America.

Ahem.

Anyway, as I was saying, it's a living—albeit an uncertain one fraught with incessant insecurity. And yet, from afar, the life of a purveyor of popular culture often appears unrealistically romantic (and I concede that it is, at least in comparison to the dull routine of an assembly line laborer).

"But what of that?" as a friend of mine so often used to ask himself, rhetorically. Now that I've established beyond a doubt that the talented titans who make it their mission to produce the Mighty Marvel magick are actually "living in the material world," and that they can occasionally be found at obscenely late hours sequestered in various all-night eateries scribbling frantically to capture their elusive visions on paper, how do I intend to relate that irrelevant revelation to the subject at hand—namely, this incredible FOOM issue devoted especially to the dynamic Defenders?

That's another story.

Part 2: *de FOOM*

Tradition has it that, here at the magnificent Marvel Comics Group, the readers are (collectively, in the final analysis) the true editors. That is even more directly the case with Marveldom's favorite fan mag—FOOM. By casting your votes for the Irving Awards, each of you has a voice in determining the editorial direction of this, the offical organ of the Inner Elite. Indeed, this issue is an ample illustration of that principle in action, and an accurate reflection of last year's Irving Awards for most-requested lead article in FOOM (Howard the Duck having already been featured in ish #15).

What keeps us creative types going as individuals, during those aforementioned hours on the other side of midnight (besides the mundane need for money), is the personal fulfillment provided by the act of creation,

and DEFENDERS!

Editorial by David Anthony Kraft

itself, and the assurance of an appreciative and enthusiastic audience.

That's you, folks.

It's up to the multitudinous Friends Of Ol' Marvel to ply us with frantic feedback and to give us an honest idea of what you want to see. FOOM is your quarterly bull session with the Bullpen.

Make the most of it.

Part 3: *Defenders*

It was one of those days when the phone and the doorbell just wouldn't stop ringing, when distraction piled upon distraction—until, finally, I was driven to distraction, myself!

Romance gave way to reality.

Tucking the penciled pages of DEFENDERS #46 into a plain brown envelope, I determinedly disappeared into the crowded afternoon streets of New York City, ultimately to find myself hunched in a dark corner of Nathan's hot dog emporium on 59th and Madison, safe from all but the unpremeditated interruptions of the occasional unpredictable customer, at last able to dialogue THE DEFENDERS.

Another time, I remember nearly missing a plane to Toronto while, suddenly inspired, I dashed off page after page of DEFENDERS #44. All except for one. The explanation for the origin of the Red Rajah. That one I wrote while in the air, during my return trip from Toronto to NYC, completing it just as the plane touched down at La Guardia.

There are many other such anecdotes. That's because THE DEFENDERS is a deceptive book. Not only do you never know what may happen next in the storyline, but you also never know what may happen next—*period.* At least, that has been and continues to be my experience. It was the same for Steve Gerber. And for those before him, as well. That's what makes THE DEFENDERS so much fun.

Unpredictability is the operating word. Sheer spontaneity. And a dash of audacity.

Obviously, THE DEFENDERS is a very personal and favorite topic of mine. I welcome this opportunity to devote some further attention to the most deserving and dynamic group concept currently extant, and I hope, in my enthusiasm, to shed some further insight into a subject selected for special scrutiny by me fellow FOOMers and DEFENDERS devotees.

You are now about to be afforded a glimpse of popular culture in progress, because you demanded it. As for me, I couldn't be happier, if I had picked the topic myself.

And since I've just finished my strawberry sundae and my third cup of coffee, it's time for me to dash back out into the rain and the night, to hurry back to my apartment and write more of DEFENDERS #53.

Reality is about to give way to romance.

Take care and stay aware!

—DAK

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MIGHTY MARVEL

THE ROCK RAVES THAT REFUSED TO DIE!

Remember how we made merry mention a couple issues ago of THE DEFENDERS #45, which featured a dynamic dedication to rock-group **Rush**, by Dave the Dude and Roguish Roger? Well, it seems the last words on the subject were yet to be added by **Neil Peart**, drummer/songwriter for the band, who was quoted in the 12 May 1977 issue of **Circus Magazine** as saying: "I read that issue and I enjoyed it. THE DEFENDERS was a pretty cerebral kind of comic. We were knocked out, and it really meant a lot to us. It was like real credibility. That tiny little line in the comic book meant more to us than a whole issue of **Rolling Stone** or anything else. It really means something to us because that's a real measure of respect. It's from another artist, and it's like the praise of the praiseworthy."

'Nuff said!

* * *

AGENT OF FORTUNE

As eagle-eyed longtime Marvel enthusiasts already know, Energetic **Ed Hannigan** is a Bullpen habitue. His titanic tenure in the world's top coalition of comics talents dates back more than half a decade. He has, at one time or another, done almost every different task there is to do on our ever-popular line of thrilling titles—from being an early production manager on our black-and-white magazines, to penciling such pulse-pounding strips as PLANET OF THE APES and KULL THE DESTROYER, to pinch-scripting POWER MAN, to assistant-editing the entire current array of color Marvel Comics.

And that's not all!

Ed has often applied his artistic acumen to designing some of our most outstanding cover scenes, and his incredible illustrations for the covers of issue #'s 46-48 of THE DEFENDERS earned him the accolades of Marveldom Assembled, as well as the opportunity to do the pandemonious pencils on the several-part Devil Slayer story appearing in that series.

His dedication to superior graphic storytelling is truly dutiful, and even extends to designing and modeling the actual costume for the evil **Agent of Fortune** character introduced in the DEFENDERS/Devil Slayer storyline, as evinced by the accompanying fearsome photos, wherein normally non-aggressive Hannigan makes his dramatic debut and does his dynamic dirty-work on garrulous by-stander **Gary Brodsky**.

Thus, Energetic Ed proves once again why he earned his alliterative Marvel appellation—through sheer unrestrained enthusiasm coupled with spontaneous creativity!

MINI-ITEMS

Do you look like CAPTAIN AMERICA?

If so, MARVEL COMICS wants you for personal appearances!!

SUPER-HERO STAND-INS

If you've ever wondered how we recruit the laudable lookalikes for the incredible impersonations of our cavortin' characters in personal appearances (as mentioned elsewhere in this feature, for instance), then wonder no longer, wondrous ones! Reproduced here is the nearly half-page ad that ran in the 1 April 1977 issue of **Backstage,** the tabloid of thespians. Qualifications for the job? "Blue eyes, cleft chin, square jaw, straight teeth, at least 6 ft. tall, at least 175 lbs." That's all there is to it folks—that and a properly expansive personality, of course. A strenuous series of auditions are held to determine whether the applicants have the noble demeanor and true stature of a super-hero, and the result is what you see on TV and in various public appearances around the country—living embodiments of the legendary comic-book characters that have made Mighty Marvel the rage of the modern age!

GREAT ADVENTURE!

Those of you who live in the greater New York/New Jersey area have certainly seen the scintillatin' TV spot ads for that nifty New Jersey amusement park located near Jackson and known as **Great Adventure.** But for those of you who haven't, we've just gotta mention that several of our cavortin' characters make cameo appearances in the course of the commercial, among them Spider-Man, Captain America—and the mildly 'mazing Ms. Marvel! So if you're ever in the area, be sure to stop by and indulge in the **Great Adventure** experience, and don't be surprised if you happen to run into some familiar Marvel super-folks while you're there! Oh, yeah, and be sure to tell 'em the big-hearted Bullpen sent ya, okay?

DUCK TALES

The never-ending parade of print-media coverage of the feisty fowl phenomenon known as Howard the Duck marches on, much too multitudinous to mention, for the most part. However, we feel constrained to call your attention occasionally to particularly prestigious press notices, the latest of which is a mini-feature (replete with photo of a grimacing **Steve Gerber**) in the pages of that premier men's publication, **Playboy.** Indeed, the prime promulgator of HTD is quoted in the June 1977 issue about the premise for the popular (and decidedly non-pristine) protagonist who has set all comicdom on its collective ear, and as usual, Steve speaks his piece.

Or, as Howard himself might say, **"Waughh!"**

Note: We're just so blamed busy here at the Bullpen that sometimes Mighty Marvel news items slip right past us—so if you see anything that might deserve mention here, please pass it along to us, and earn our undying gratitude as well as a plug in these very pages. Thanks, FOOMers!

THE 1977 IRVING AWARDS

Yep, True Believer—it's time again for all faithful FOOMers to participate in magniloquent Marvel's own version of the motion picture industry's oscillatin' Oscars! Here's where all you Frantic Ones get to decide which of your favorite super-heroes (and super-staffers!) will be the recipients of this year's coveted Irving Awards! Please cast one vote in each category:

1) **Favorite Marvel Mag:**
2) **Favorite Marvel Cover:**
3) **Favorite Marvel Star (male lead):**
4) **Favorite Marvel Star (femme fatale):**
5) **Favorite Marvel Supporting Character:**
6) **Favorite Marvel Writer:**
7) **Favorite Marvel Artist (penciler):**
8) **Favorite Marvel Artist (inker):**
9) **Favorite Marvel Letterer:**
10) **Favorite Marvel Colorist:**
11) **Favorite Marvel Color Story:**
12) **Favorite Marvel Black-and-White Story:**
13) **Who would you most like to see given his, her, or their own strip?**

SPECIAL BOMBASTIC BONUS BALLOT CATEGORIES!

14) **Favorite Marvel Reprint Mag:**
15) **Favorite Marvel Reprint Story (title and issue number):**
16) **Favorite Issue of FOOM:**
17) **Favorite Single FOOM Feature:**
18) **Who would you most like to see a feature article devoted to in a future issue of FOOM:**

Okay, Marvelite—just fill out and mail this ballot, or a reasonable facsimile thereof (no *unreasonable* facsimiles, please), to us no later than *15 November 1977!* 'Nuff said!

1977 IRVING AWARDS
Marvel Comics Group
575 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Another FOOMtastic Preview Feature!

SILVER SURFER

THE SILVER SURFER book for Simon and Schuster is a cooperative effort between *Stan Lee* and myself. We're working as we've always worked. It's going to be the Silver Surfer, in depth, because it's a serious book; it's a comic as comics should be; it's the "human" side of the Surfer, explored inside and out.

I've always enjoyed working with Stan — we've been a successful team. In the collaboration, something good comes out; it's the chemistry of a good team. *Joe Sinnott*, who is inking it, is a part of that chemistry, too. I tried to make the artwork as visually interesting as possible, so that the finished product will be a landmark!

— Jack Kirby

A page of powerful original pencil art by Jack (King) Kirby!

DEFENDERS

SUPERLATIVE

ROY THOMAS

THE DEFENDERS started as a series, as a result of two converging ideas. The first was my usage of the Hulk in a small and unofficial kind of super-group—consisting of the Hulk, the Sub-Mariner and the Silver Surfer—in a couple issues of THE SUB-MARINER, where they fought a South American dictator-type. They seemed like a good team. I put them together because they were like earth, air and sea. The second converging idea was that *Stan Lee* wanted to do a magazine that would utilize the Hulk in a group, even though he didn't fit very well. We had sort of a non-group with these three, and Stan liked the idea—but he didn't want to use the Silver Surfer regularly, so he suggested Dr. Strange, instead. I didn't think Dr. Strange belonged in a group—but there was a certain challenge to the idea, so I accepted it. THE DEFENDERS was Stan's title, but I went off and created it in my own way—kind of a loosely-organized non-group. Since that time, it's been pretty popular—especially when the Hulk is in it.

I especially enjoyed doing the three Defenders issues of MARVEL FEATURE—particularly because the issues had the long lead story in the front, and a shorter feature in the back. But I was handling THE AVENGERS at the time, too, and I didn't really want to write a lot of group books, so when THE DEFENDERS became a regular title, I passed it on to *Steve Englehart* to script.

STEVE ENGLEHART

THE DEFENDERS was one of the first couple of series that I got, when I first started writing for Marvel. They gave me THE BEAST and RINGO KID and THE DEFENDERS. RINGO KID never got off the ground, obviously. THE DEFENDERS gave me a chance to write the Sub-Mariner and the Hulk and Dr. Strange—although Dr. Strange didn't mean a whole lot to me at the time. I was more interested in the other two guys, the first major Marvel characters I got to write. Sub-Mariner has always been a favorite of mine. I have a streak that really likes melodrama. The Sub-Mariner has the same kind of feel I associate with certain strips from the forties—dark and murky—so he was probably my favorite in the group.

When I first started out, I'd had twenty-three years of saying, "Gee, I wish I could do that someday," so the ideas came faster than hell. When I was a fan, I always knew what I liked; so when I got in there, that's who I wrote for. It was my impression of what the fans wanted to see. Soon, I was doing five books a month—and then THE DEFENDERS went monthly. That was in the summer (with the Defenders/Avengers war), so that got me up to six.

In those days, six books a month was just getting me warmed up. Later, when the initial flood had died down and I had to keep coming up with new stuff, me and deadlines began to look a little more askance at each other.

DIALOGUES

SCRIPTERS SPEAK!

Also, when I first started out in comics, I didn't have a track record. The first really big thing that put my judgement on the line was the Defenders/Avengers war. When I first proposed that, everybody said it would never sell, that nobody wants to read a story that runs in two separate books, that readers wouldn't be able to get all the books and all that.

As it turned out, the stories sold really well—so I proved my case to Marvel and that made it easier to do some of the CAPTAIN AMERICA and DR. STRANGE stuff later, stuff that was a little bit offbeat. But the Defenders/Avengers war wasn't done in order to prove a point; it just so happened that one night I was sitting around and I came up with the idea. The more I thought about it, the more I liked it, so I'm glad they let me do it, and I'm glad it came off as interestingly as it did. The hardest thing about doing the book was the non-group situation, although it was kind of interesting each time to set up a special reason why they would get together. That always took a couple pages, and when I started writing comics, the books were twenty-one pages. Inflation sort of whittled that away, and after a while it became tougher to come up with a reason for them to get together and still do the story, too. I know I felt, for the first year or so, that I had THE DEFENDERS pretty well down. THE AVENGERS continued to escape me, for about a year and a half, before I really felt that I had it. Part of that didn't have anything to do with the difference in the group or non-group status of either series, it was just that Roy Thomas had done such a good job on THE AVENGERS that I was trying to do the series his way instead of my own, and there was that conflict. Even though I had also taken over THE DEFENDERS from Roy, he had just done a couple of issues, so it was still pretty loose as far as what could be done. I always liked to play off character against character, and their non-group status had more possibilities built in, as far as I could determine.

When I finally left the series, it was very amiable. After a year, I really felt (and the general reader reaction seemed to agree) that my DEFENDERS had struck a pretty good note, but I wasn't very happy with what I was doing on THE AVENGERS. So I decided, rather than to split my energies between the two supergroups, I would give up one or the other. Eventually, I decided to drop the one that I was successful with, and keep trying to do something with the one that I wasn't so successful with yet.

That was it, and when I got to the end of the Defenders/Avengers war at the end of the summer, *Len Wein* took it over.

LEN WEIN

Believe it or not, how I became writer of THE DEFENDERS is one of the few things I can't really remember. I do remember helping *Steve Englehart* out, by finishing the script on half an issue. Steve was beginning his Avengers/Defenders epic, at that point, and he carried it through the summer.

Roy Thomas offered me the series, somehow, and since I had always wanted to write THE INCREDIBLE HULK, I took it—mostly for the chance to write the Hulk. Steve made a few suggestions; he was planning to bring in Nighthawk. I used the character, because I thought it was a good idea to bring in somebody with a sense of humor that would add a little lightness to the book. Everybody else was so grim all the time. It wasn't my decision to take the Sub-Mariner out of the series. It was about the time SUPER-VILLAIN TEAM-UP was in the planning stages, and Roy wanted the Sub-Mariner for that book. The first issue of THE DEFENDERS that I wrote didn't have the Sub-Mariner in it, but I brought him in as guest star in the next issue. Rather than have another character replace him immediately, Roy suggested that we play musical super-heroes and try different characters every issue, to fill in his space—so Professor X, Son of Satan, and Daredevil all showed up as one-shot guest replacements.

For me, the non-group concept just didn't play. I was going to work against it, rather than continually come up with rationales for getting them together, which is why I made the Hulk, Dr. Strange and the Valkyrie all friends; it made it easier to explain what the Hulk was doing there every issue, by giving him new friends. Of course, none of the rest of them had any inclination to be part of a group—except for Nighthawk, who had come from the Squadron Sinister and was used to it. That's why I gave them their headquarters out on the Nassau/Suffolk county line, which *Sal Buscema* did a great job of drawing. The headquarters was designed by Nighthawk. I had planned to do an issue wherein he calls a meeting of the Defenders and nobody comes, because they're not a group.

It was my own decision, after a few issues, to leave the series. Even though the book was selling very well, and the reaction was very positive, I just didn't feel I was doing it right. I wasn't adding to the group what I wanted to add, nor did I feel that I was developing things along the proper lines. Steve Gerber, meanwhile, was tired of DAREDEVIL. I thought it would be nice to work with a straightforward super-hero, so Gerber and I traded. I was anxious to get involved with DAREDEVIL, and I had a bunch of ideas, but I ended up on DAREDEVIL for just half of one issue!

STEVE GERBER

I remember exactly how I came to write THE DEFENDERS. *Len Wein* wanted to do DAREDEVIL, which I had been scripting for about two years. I thought it was time for a change, and I had never written a group (or even a non-group) feature before. Those being my younger days, I leapt at the chance.

Some people might claim that I abandoned the so-called non-group concept, since I tended to concentrate a lot on the format, and on the characters: Dr. Strange, Nighthawk, Valkyrie and the Hulk. About the most difficult thing for me was doing Dr. Strange and trying to conform to the Englehart version of the character, which I liked so much. I had to purposely avoid putting Dr. Strange in situations where the others were

engaged in fistfights; in fact, I had him knocked out for a whole issue, once! The reason is, in the context of a super-hero situation and series such as THE DEFENDERS, he could do virtually anything. Finally, it just came down to arbitrarily deciding that his powers had to be limited in their ability to affect matters on the physical plane.

One of the major objectives I had was to establish a real distinction between THE DEFENDERS and THE AVENGERS. All the Avengers' romances and stuff had pretty much been confined to the intra-group structure. I wanted to make some substantial changes by introducing new characters, as well as concentrating on character involvement and development, particularly for those characters who appeared only in that book. That was the specific reason for introducing Jack Norriss and Trish Starr, who really had no relation to the Defenders as super-heroes. Incidentally, that idea was fought by virtually everybody I know.

I guess my funniest memories of scripting the series involve the Eelar story, which I started plotting with no idea of where it was going. It was a mess. I went over to *Gerry Conway*'s, and we both agreed it was horrible—but *Don Heck* was already drawing it. So what we did was to re-plot it, and insert pages in between those already done. The whole thing was all just

complete absurd bull We had a character that was performing a completely senseless act, and then let the mystery stretch and develop itse.f, after that. I have a tendency to plot a mystery story that way, anyhow, leaving clues throughout so that I can try and figure it out by the end of the story, myself (although, I guess, that Eelar story was about the weirdest of that type)

I think most of what I have to say about THE DEFENDERS s contained in the book. It was really fun structuring the past lives of the Valkyr e and Nighthawk!

DAVID KRAFT

My scripting stint on THE DEFENDERS has been entirely unpremeditated—and totally unexpected When Roguish *Roger Slifer* and I volunteered to dia.ogue one lone issue as a duo, we had no idea where it would lead! We were handed the already-penciled artwork for the third instal ment of the four-part Red Rajah storyline, and as it turned out, that ish was basica ly the explanatory episode for the entire mini-series But there was *no* written plot of any kind! Only p.ctures So we made the whole th ng up ourselves, on the spot—after a lot of hard thinking Once we had the theme, everything e se sort of fell into place

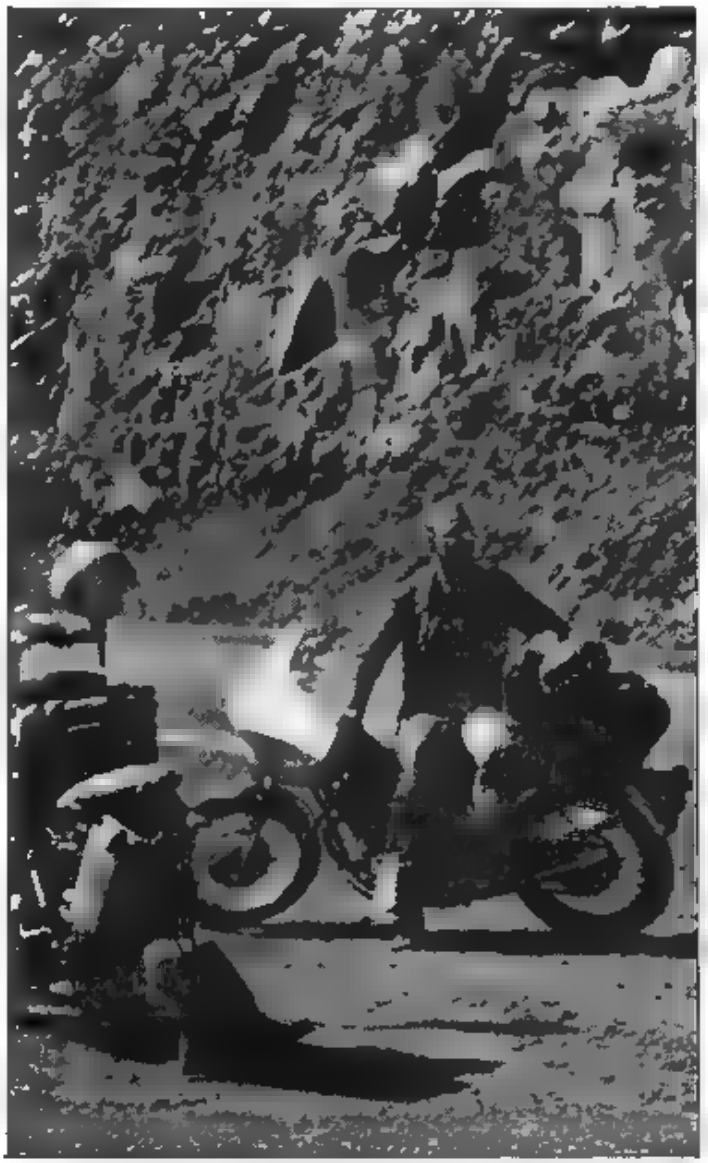
W th the interim issue in which several of the Defenders split the scene (#46), so did Roger However, while he didn't stick around to co-plot the "Who Remembers Scorpio?" tr logy, he did contr bute several creditable suggestions and ideas of which I have since made use, such as the midnight intervention of Moon Knight and Val's subsequent registration in college I should also mention that I enjoyed working with *Keith* (the Giffe) *Giffen*, who has since gone his separate way, as wel

And something that particularly pleases me is the fact that, thus far, there's been a distinct theme to each of the several-issue storyline sequences we've done for THE DEFENDERS

The characters, themselves, are a riot to write Not only do I get to deve.op plenty of my own like Gemin , Sergei, Dollar Bill and Devil Slayer but I get to explore oldies like Scorpio, too As for the Defenders—I couldn't ask for a better cast of super-characters! The Hulk has been a fave of mine since the very, very first halcyon issue (my only fan mail to Marvel ever printed appeared in two issues of THE INCREDIBLE HULK) Both Nighthawk and the Va kyrie have myriad potent alities and fascinating unexplored facets of personality And He lcat is my particular, personal pet character! I've had the good fortune to do her dialogue from her very f rst appearance in THE DEFENDERS, and I'd love to scr pt her in a solo series all her own She's sort of a carefree, unsophisticated counterpart to the wisecracking Spidey of a few years ago Fun and fancy free but grow ng up fast in a very real world!

It s pretty commonly acceded in comicdom that all long-running series titles go through a certain espec ally-fallow period Owing to a variety of factors, principally the unique non-group concept and the constant creativity of the corps of writers who preceded me, I feel the series is still in its infancy—despite the fact that well over fifty issues have already seen print THE DEFENDERS is in its prime as a steadi y-develop.ng, major new milestone in the Marvel Age of Comics, it has yet to fall into a predictable pattern, and s just gearing up for untold future greatness

I am delighted, indeed, to participate in shaping and developing the dynamic DEFENDERS n the days ahead It's an enthusi astic and enjoyable endeavor—even if it does involve all-too-frequent deadlines!



THE DEFENDERS SAGA

A dynamic dissertation by Ralph Macchio

(Scrivener of the Stars)

unused page of original pencils by RE TH[illegible]ENDERS Defenders #53 at long last!

The epitome of the group concept in the Marvel Mythos, at least is exemplified by THE AVENGERS and THE FANTASTIC FOUR These two supergroups are made up of individuals who, through mutual experience or commitment to justice, naturally associate with one another It's the nature of the group reality Those of like mind and morality often join forces with one another to achieve common goals Individual purpose is given a heightened numerical thrust through interaction with the group organism That is both the *status quo* and *raison d'etre* for nearly all supergroups

Except THE DEFENDERS

Rascally *Roy Thomas* (erudite *editor emeritus* and scripter of CONAN, TARZAN, and many other Marvel titles) has a well-deserved reputation in the comics biz for making outrageous ideas come to startling life on paper But the titanic Mr Thomas isn't only a conceptualizer, he's also an administrator *par excellance*, which means he's able to put his awesome ideas into practice And nowhere—I mean *nowhere*—must his powers of creativity have been taxed so fully as in his attempt to mold the first real non team into a viable comics reality

When I first heard (in early 1971) that the Marvel Comics Group was preparing to star three of the most notable loners in a comicdom in a *single* book, I was intrigued and, quite honestly a bit disgruntled Much as I wanted to see if Roy could pull it off, I still had to contend with the purist lurking within me, who rebelled at the mere notion of such a potential grouping Teaming the hostile Hulk (of all marauding man-brutes) with the savage Sub-Mariner (of all people-hating princes) well, that could certainly prove interesting, if not downright devastating. After all., they *had* been partners of a temporary and circumstantial sort back in those early days of the Marvel Age of Comics (circa 1963)

But when I learned that Dr Strange (probably my all-time favorite Marvel hero) was also to be intimately involved in this venture, my wary enthusiasm faltered Again, a dichotomy of feelings birthed uncertainty When Doc's own mag had been so sorrowfully discontinued, in late 1969, I felt dejected for months afterward, the book had really reached a peak of perfection, and the Mighty Marvel line just wasn't the same without it So, much as I would have preferred that he come back solo as the star of his own title again, I was hesitantly prepared to accept Dr Strange as a group member if it meant he'd return from oblivion

And so, a walking mass of contradictions and uncertainties, I entered my local candy store in September of 1971, and purchased the first issue of MARVEL FEATURE, featuring THE DEFENDERS

Ya know what—I *liked* it!

Somehow, Roy the Boy had made the concept work, without stretching too far, he had made the unlikely teaming seem plausible enough And, indeed, tying in the Yandroth Scientist Supreme from Dr Strange's final appearance in STRANGE TALES #168 lent a nice touch of continuity and credibility The artwork had a stunningly unique look to it, which grew on me with subsequent re-readings, courtesy of *Ross Andru* and *Bill Everett* Of course, the Dr Strange solo story in the back of that issue, entitled "The Return," and written by Roy and drawn by *Don Heck*, whetted my occult appetite for more such single features starring the good doctor

By the time I had read "Day of the Defenders" (the main story) for the fourth time, my trepidations had been set aside With the right scripter, even such an offbeat and audacious assemblage of malcontents as Subby, the Hulk and Dr Strange could be done well At least, it could be done *once* But MARVEL FEATURE was slated to be a quarterly title—and the dynamic Defenders were to be the mainstay Naw, the success of that single debut story could never be repeated

Could it?

After all, following their first adventure together, the intrepid trio

"AT LAST- I WAS ABLE TO RETURN TO THIS EARTH NEVER MIND HOW-
AND I BROUGHT WITH ME A SECRET BEYOND ALL SECRETS A KNOWLEDGE BEYOND ALL KNOWLEDGE
ONCE I CALLED MYSELF THE "SCIENTIST SUPREME"- WHAT A LAUGH!
I TOOK SCIENCE AND MAGIC TO BUILD THIS ULTIMATE MACHINE-
THIS BE-ALL AND END-ALL OF DEVICES THIS OMEGA-TRON!
I WEARS MY FACE AND ONCE AND ONLY ONCE IT SHALL SPEAK MY NAME-
AND THAT WILL BE THE LAST SOUND THE WORLD SHALL EVER HEAR!!
FOR, WE ALL BUT CAUSED THE EARTH'S DESTRUCTION--- WHILE WE SOUGHT TO BE ITS VALIANT DEFENDERS.
DEFENDERS! A FITTING NAME FOR A GROUPING AS WE-- IF EVER WE'VE NE TO MEET AGAIN.
HULK NEV WANTS TO G TOGETHE AGAIN. NE
HULK WAS IN GROUP ONCE-- CALLED AVENGERS.
DIDN'T LIKE IT.

Two scintillating and unforgettable scenes scripted by RASCALLY ROY (from Marvel feature #1) depicting the dynamic debut of the Defenders!

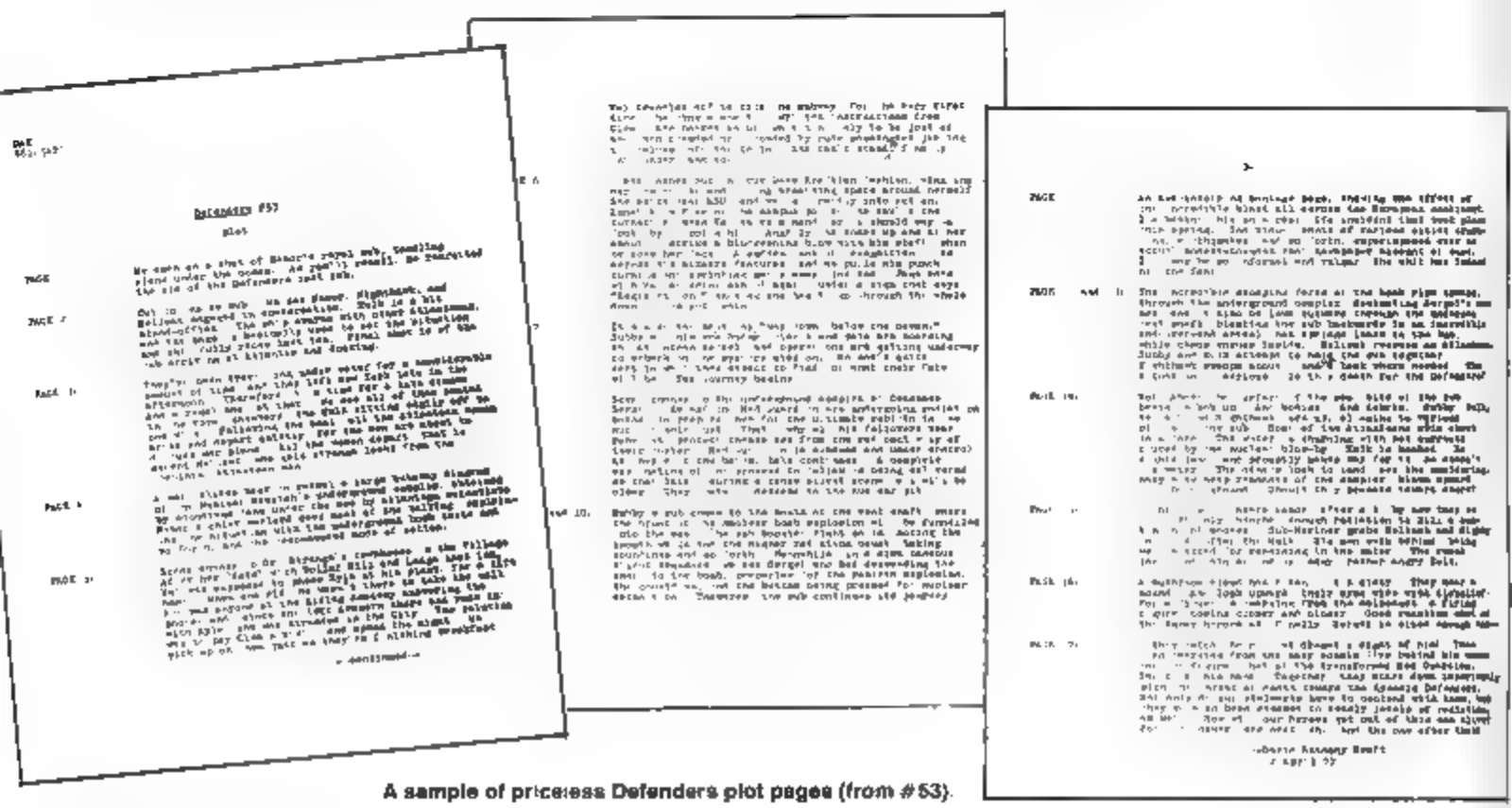
who formed the fledgling Defenders rather refresingly hadn't stood together, arm-in-arm in true comic book tradition, and vowed to fight all the evil in the world until their dying day. In fact, although Dr. Strange had tried such a tactic on the last page, the Hulk, in his typically eloquent fashion, summed up his feelings thusly: "Hulk was in group once called Avengers. Didn't like it." Namor, too, split to return to his own pressing affairs at that point, leaving Dr. Strange standing alone. Not exactly the traditional team spirit!

Anyway, another three months passed, and eventually the second issue of MARVEL FEATURE hit the stands and fell quickly into my hands. It seems the dread Dormammu, Dr. Strange's most malevolent adversary, was attempting to enter the Earth's dimension via sacrilegious rites performed during All Hallow's Eve on Bald Mountain. Once again, the Mystic Master went into action, summoning his two powerful allies to help stave off the threat. And, yet again, the storyline and inherent character motivations all jibed. For the second time, Dr. Strange served as the catalyst, bringing the Hulk and the Sub-Mariner to his side.

I AGREE! SOMEHOW, THE EVIL-EYE MUST STILL EXIST--
--AND THE DEFENDERS WILL FIND IT--OR PERISH IN THE ATTEMPT!
THE DEFENDERS--AND HAWKEYE! I'M NOT PLAYIN' A LONE HAND IF A GUY WHO NEVER HASSLED ME NEEDS HELP!
SO SAY WE ALL ARCHER SO SAY WE ALL!
'Nuff said! (From #8).

As if to lend credence to that old maxim that good things come in threes, the third ish of MARVEL FEATURE was another winner. For that erstwhile outing, Roy brought back an obscure monster, named Xemnu the Titan, as the villain. Curiously enough, in his first appearance (JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY #'s 62 and 66, both published in 1960), Xemnu was known as (guess what?) *the Hulk!* For the third time, Roy set up a workable set of circumstances that allowed the three heroes to come together for a short while before going their separate ways again. Alas, with the conclusion of "A Titan Walks Among Us," it seemed as if their parting of the ways was going to be permanent. If you think I'm joshing you, just listen to the savage Sub-Mariner, himself, as quoted from the conclusion of that adventure: "And let not even Dr. Strange summon us in Earth's next hour of need—for we will not come." Sounded like ol' Sardine Puss meant his mackerels, wouldn't you say? In other words—the split had to be *final*.

Two months later (sporting an August cover date) the Defenders bounced back in their own spanking new mag titled, appropriately enough, THE DEFENDERS. Trumpets blared and heads were scratched—if you'll pardon my mixed metaphors. What wonderment had Mighty Marvel wrought? An experiment which just a year earlier seemed bizarre in concept had proven popular enough to warrant its own title. I was mind-boggled. Really. As I brought the first issue home, I couldn't keep from peeking inside to see who had been given the rather unenviable task of scripting the series, since it seemed Roy Thomas was too burdened with his new duties as Editor-in-Chief to continue on the book. That lucky man turned out to be *Steve Englehart*.


A sample of priceless Defenders plot pages (from #53).

ONCE MORE THE SILVER SURFER HAS RIDDEN HIS WAY--AND ONCE MORE MEN HAVE SHUFFLEBOARD THAT TRUSTY!
I MUST SOAR, ALF--FOR WHERE THE SURFER FLIES--
--HE FLIES ALONE!
THIS ENTIRE VENTURE HAS BEEN A DISASTER.
I WONDER: IN ASSUMING THE MANTLE OF LEADERSHIP FOR THE DEFENDERS...
HAVE I ASSUMED TOO MUCH?
AAAAAAAAAA
NEXT: THE NEW DEFENDER --AND THE OLD AVENGER!

Defenders divided! Stainless STEVE ENGLEHART scripts out the Surfer (from #3).

Steve is a writer for whom my admiration knows no bounds Although, at the time, he was still a relatively new scribe of the Marvel legends, I had faith that he would be equal to the task

He was

For example, Steve's plot for the first three issues included a group of magical nasties known as The Undying Ones I had to hand it to him a finer choice of villains, at least insofar as the Defenders were concerned, you couldn't have found anywhere. In the past, these magical minions had menaced the Hulk, Prince Namor, and even Dr. Strange, so a conflict between any one of the Defenders and The Undying Ones could conceivably involve all three members of the new non-group. And, of course, with Englehart's fertile mind at the controls, it did. I felt that particular storyline was the non team's actual baptism of fire, since it showcased just how effectively they could operate together over a somewhat extended period

From there, let's jump a few adventures ahead to acknowledge one of the most mammoth epics ever The Avengers/Defenders War. Wow! I haven't been so completely blown away by an epic since the equally awesome Kree/Skrull conflict, which took place earlier in THE AVENGERS (#89-97) Aside from the brilliant plotting and superb pacing of the Defenders/Avengers mind stunner, I was most pleased with the plausible rationale it offered for the Defenders to hang together for another few issues Let's face it, neither the Hulk nor the Sub-Mariner has been known to bug out on a battle, and Dr. Strange was intimately involved with the fighting, due to the fact that Dormammu was at the heart of the conflict

Masterful, absolutely masterful

And, much as I loved Steve's ability to work with the Defenders as a group unit, there was something beyond even *that*—something which I credit as his major contribution to the non-group. I'm referring to the sword-wielding super-lady born of the Enchantress' magicks the vibrant Valkyrie When Roy first introduced her (in AVENGERS #83) in that hilariously kooky story that's long been a favorite of mine But when Steve reintroduced her in (DEFENDERS #3), she became the living embodiment of tragedy, her fully-developed persona thrust into control of the mind and body of the insane Barbara Denton Norriss. The potential personality problems extant in her new incarnation were simply staggering; reams of philosophical and psychological speculation could be sparked from even a cursory examination of Val's identity crisis Englehart began, in the first few pages of issue #5, to explore her awful dilemma, but he just nicked the surface . for, unfortunately, he wasn't destined to remain with THE DEFENDERS long enough to see it through At any rate, I feel Valkyrie is one of the most fascinating characters yet to appear in comics, and her ever-unfolding saga has held my rapt attention through five writers and over fifty issues

When Englehart left THE DEFENDERS, with the end of the quest for the Black Knight's soul (in issue #11), the non-team split up again, albeit under more friendly circumstances than in the past. A solid foundation had been established, the better for future writers to build upon. One enthralling element of THE DEFENDERS was already beginning to impress itself on my awareness here was a comic book which had tapped into the mainstream Marvel Universe as surely as any other title before it, and yet one which retained the strange sense of freshness and life that normally begins to wane as most such titles reach their second year of publication

THE DEFENDERS is a Marvel book in the truest sense, and yet in other ways it is so totally different as to be in a category by itself It is not bound by formula, oath, dogma, or even rigid membership standards Anything goes and that's largely what makes anticipating each and every issue such a delight

When *Len Wein* took over as writer (DEFENDERS #12), I was

Valhalla! (from #4).

particularly pleased to see the emphasis shift more towards interaction among the Defenders as individuals. In Steve's final three issues, the Defenders/Avengers clash had so dominated all else that the personal lives of the characters and even their unique non-group status had temporarily taken a back-seat. Len quickly reaffirmed the peculiar nature of the book by altering the line-up a bit. The Sub-Mariner returned only to leave again, more-or-less permanently, an issue or two later. Valkyrie took a leave of absence to visit Cobbler's Roost, Vermont, to seek out her human origins. Luke Cage popped in, from the street scene, for a while. And Dr. Strange finally asserted himself as leader of the Defenders.

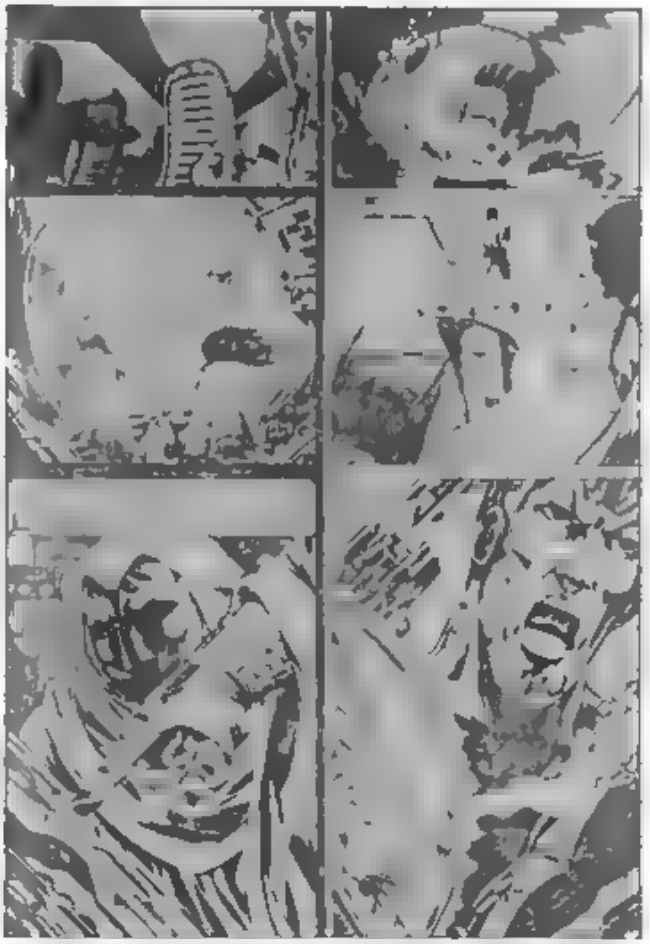
As a reader, I approved of most of the sweeping changes. All but one. Dr. Strange still seemed out of place in the roster, despite being the one primarily responsible for bringing the Defenders together in the past. Even the Hulk seemed better suited to be a so-called Defender than Doc. I just couldn't accept the Master of the Mystic Arts first sensing a world-threatening menace, and then summoning these guys in bathing suits and purple pants to come traipsing after him. Also, Strange's magical incantations never seemed to be truly magical in nature under any of THE DEFENDERS' writers. Doc's bolts of bedevilment, which in his own mag had been used primarily to thwart mystical menaces, were now used to affect ordinary matter as if they were simple force blasts. I can't really blame anyone for this, though, because Doc *did* have to contribute to a battle, even when the Defenders weren't fighting strictly occult antagonists. Still, despite my earlier eagerness to see him back, I dearly wished Dr. Strange would pack it all in and leave the Defenders.

BY THE MYSTANTI-- IT CANNOT BE--!
SPECTERS, SPIRITS, GHOSTS FROM OUT OF THE PAST...!
AYE, STEPHEN STRANGE--GHOSTS OF THOSE MANY WHO DIED BECAUSE OF YOU!

Lively LEN WEIN sends Dr. Strange to hell (from Giant-Size #2).

Lively Len didn't stay with THE DEFENDERS as scripter for long, but he contributed his share of excellent stories. One, in particular (GIANT SIZE DEFENDERS #2) bears mentioning because it served as such a good literary vantage point from which to view the inner motivations and fears of the non-group personnel. The separate trial to which every Defender was subjected by the evil sorcerer, Asmodeus, and in which each was rather forcefully

Foom Exclusive: Once in a lifetime opportunity to see two separate artists' interpretations of the same plot — side-by-side!



made to face his or her deepest fear, left an impression on me that has persisted to the present Had Len Wein written no other DEFENDERS story, for this epic alone he would still have to be counted among the major contributors to this series' surprising developments.

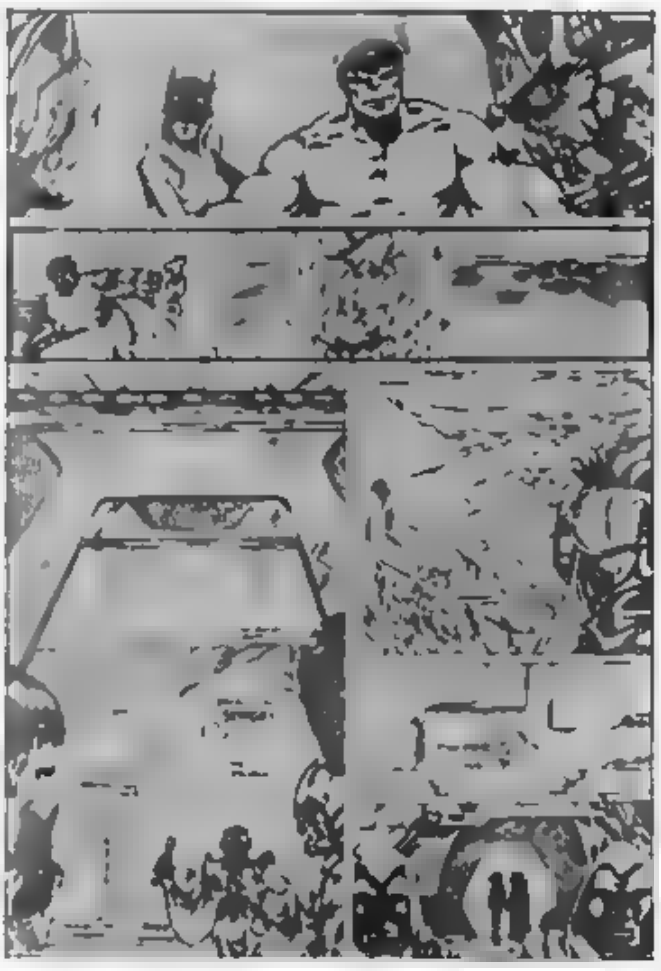
Steve Gerber slipped easily into the scripting saddle (with ish #20) and remained with THE DEFENDERS for well over twenty issues—far longer than any other writer to date I remember being really amazed at the strength of Steve's first issue With a great deal of aplomb and finesse, Gerber imparted great symbolic weight to The Undying Ones' attempted conquest of Earth, and its affect upon the formation of the Defenders Apparently, the head honcho—The Nameless One—had long known that the Defenders would come together, and he used that knowledge to his own advantage by subtly manipulating events in several dimensions, so that the transformation of Barbara Denton Norriss into the Valkyrie would ultimately further his ends

toward earthly domination

When I think of Gerber's DEFENDERS, I think of head trips. In a more direct manner than Englehart or Wein, he used the odd amalgam of heroes to make some telling statements on such minor topics as the state of the world, Man's basic nature, and other such subjects Yet he never lost sight of the series itself as a flexible opportunity for character development The mystery of Barbara Norriss was explored in far more depth than ever before—and with the introduction of Barb's husband, Jack Norriss, the gut wrenching tragedy of the vibrant Valkyrie became an ongoing and painful process of self-evaluation Some of the most moving sequences in THE DEFENDERS have been those in which we've been privy to the tortured thoughts that cut deeply into her mind and soul. "Who am I? What am I? Why am I?" Val persists in asking herself, again and again. I remember DEFENDERS #26, which opens with Val pensively sitting atop a jutting cliff, the gathering clouds an external reflection of her inner turmoil. Feeding in the foreground, her magnificent winged steed, Aragorn—once the possession of Dane Whitman, the Black Knight Standing in the background, hands thrust deeply into his wind-blown overcoat, her "husband" Jack Norriss. On page two, under the influence of a sudden, maddening impulse, he attempts to kiss her Her response is listless, she feels nothing and less than nothing. A hauntingly memorable scene.

As a parenthetical aside, I must mention that issue #26 was also a pivotal juncture in the Marvel Multiverse. Steve Gerber tied the

Here, the inked lettered and finished pages (from # 53), drawn by MIKE GOLDEN & TERRY AUSTIN, may be compared to unpublished pencil pages by KEITH GIFFEN.



"MY LIFE AND TIMES: TWENTY-EIGHT YEARS... AND WHERE HAS IT GOTTEN ME? YOU WANT THE TRUTH?"
"I'M STILL THAT NINE-YEAR-OLD KID WHO WAS LEFT AT WESTHAVEN."
"MORE ALONE THAN EVER, RIGHT NOW. IN FACT"
"AND I'M BACK AT THE CROSSROADS."
"I'M STILL A TROUBLEMAKER... S'TILL HOT-TEMPERED S'TILL LOOKING FOR SOMEONE TO BE MY FATHER... S'TILL ALONE."
"THE SAME CROSSROADS I'VE STOOD PARALYZED AT ALL MY LIFE."
"AND I STILL CAN'T REMEMBER HOW I GOT HERE."

Introspection and Intricacies, STEVE (Baby) GERBER style (from #32)

future timeline of the Guardians of the Galaxy into the present day Marvel Universe, and I found the amazing explanation for the apparent paradoxes genuinely satisfying. According to Steve, every man creates his own future. Each decision a given individual makes, and then carries out, opens limitless doorways into potential tomorrows. A mindblowing relativistic concept that left an indelible impression on me.

And, while we're on the subject of head trips, there's yet another Defender whose innermost confusion still remains unresolved. A guy with a lot of smarts once said: "The only thing worth writing about is the human heart in conflict with itself." That line applies to one character more obviously than any other: Kyle Richmond, also known as Nighthawk. When he first burst on the scene as the bogus Batman of the Squadron Sinister (way back in AVENGERS #70), I took an inexplicable instant liking to him. When Len Wein reintroduced him as the rebel member of that selfsame group, I knew something big was in the offing. And indeed it was: a full-fledged "membership" in the Defenders. But much as I enjoyed his somewhat revamped presence, I soon became slightly disenchanted. Y'see, I noticed that Nighthawk displays this annoying propensity for being nearly as effective as a rubber knife in a life-and-death struggle. Oh, he talks a good fight, but when the action starts, he generally flies around like some two-bit parakeet and eventually gets stomped. In all fairness, however, there have been times when I was surprised at his agility, although, over all, as a super hero and a personality, he left something to be desired.

And then that madman, Gerber, did it. Sometimes, Steve will exceed even *my* expectations, and in DEFENDERS #32, entitled "Musical Minds," he did. The real Kyle Richmond was at last revealed. With Kyle's brain as the narrator, we moved from disaster to disaster with the rich kid who had everything—except love. As I pondered the story after completing it, the fearful tapestry of a hollow, wasted life took shape. Poor Kyle. With all his money, he is still a loser. One of the walking wounded. A casualty. A victim. His college girlfriend killed in his car wreck. His corporate advisor, Pennysworth, using Richmond's funds to support a radical anti-minority group of bigots, The Sons of the Serpent. And, after being confronted with the deed, Pennysworth (himself a black man), actually took the stunned Kyle to task, in effect blaming him for what had occurred. And Trish Starr, the rich kid's former beau, scarred for life when she lost her arm in a bomb blast meant for Kyle. Horror upon horror, guilt melded with guilt. The substance of an irresponsible life. Between Nighthawk and Valkyrie, there are heartaches and problems a-plenty.

Gerber also came up with the very satisfying conclusion to what has to be the most outrageous epic ever to run in any comics magazine, bar none. I'm referring to the Headmen/Bozos/Nebulon saga, of course (in DEFENDERS #'s 31-40, and GIANT SIZE DEFENDERS #5, with peripheral portions scattered here and there in other issues, as well). This was insanity incarnate, distilled and purified. The Headmen, Nebulon, ludberdites, bozos—even Gerald Ford—all cavorted for over ten issues, with the culmination being a philosophical exchange among Dr. Strange, Nebulon and President Ford, held in nether-space. And that's not to mention about a half-dozen-or-so brains and minds being switched from head to head, by (you guessed it) the Headmen—so often and so unpredictably that you needed a scorecard to tell whose mind was in whose brain was in whose body. But viewed as an artistic whole, the blasted thing makes sense—damn good sense. Gerber constructed a multi-part masterwork that, to my knowledge, stands unique in comics. It was a fitting capstone to Steve's riotous reign on THE DEFENDERS, and is perhaps the finest sustained effort (with individual portions already classics) in the first fifty issues of the magazine.

When Steve Gerber left the series with ish #41, it was as if an era had ended for the dynamic non-team. *Sal Buscema*, who had been with THE DEFENDERS as artist, with only occasional breaks since its first

INDEED. YET TO MAINTAIN SELF-ESTEEM, SO MANY SUCH ATTRIBUTES ARE NECESSARY. AMONG THEM THE COURAGE OF YOUR OWN CONVICTIONS. A SENSE OF PURPOSE AND IDENTITY. SELF CONFIDENCE. SELF SUFFICIENCY. AND AN ESPECIALLY STRONG CONCEPT OF SELF.
OTHERWISE, YOU FALL PREY TO CONFUSION OR DESPAIR AND ARE ALL TOO EASILY SWALLOWED BY SOCIETY. THUS, IN ORDER TO SURVIVE I HAVE BECOME MY OWN CREATION. AN IMAGE. AN IDEAL!
I HAVE BECOME SCORPIO--AND I SHALL SUCCEED!
NOW, IT IS TIME FOR YOU TO COLLECT JACK NORRISS FROM THOSE UNWITTING FOOLS. PICK UP SOME BEER ON THE WAY OVER, TOO. I DON'T WANT OUR HOSTAGE GOING THIRSTY!

issue, departed at the same time Steve did. The first chapter in an excitingly successful experiment had come to a close. Yet I was upset—quite upset. Steve had yet to resolve that weird and sporadic elf subplot which had so many readers enthralled

Gerry Conway and *Keith Giffen* picked up the torch as writer and artist, respectively. Merry Gerry immediately vowed to transform the book into more of a straight superhero selection, but whether or not Conway could have achieved his goal is a moot point, because he remained on the series a scant two issues. Dialoguing duties on THE DEFENDERS devolved almost at once onto scribes *Roger Slifer* and *David Anthony Kraft*

As of ish #44, the task of finishing off Gerry's plotline, not to mention the few unresolved threads Gerber had left, fell to them However,

I'M SORRY, NICK, BUT I DON'T BELIEVE IT. I'M 52 YEARS OLD... AND IT'S ALL OVER FOR ME
I HAVE NOTHING LEFT TO BELIEVE IN OR TO LIVE FOR
NOT EVEN MYSELF.

Rogu sh Roger soon succumbed to fu l-time editorial duties, and the dazzling duet became a solo road show again, with Kraft winging .t alone (after #47)

Dave the Dude has pulled out all the stops to return the slam bang ya never-know-what's-coming-next fee. to the title (as any current reader of DEFENDERS knows for certain) In the issues since his advent, Dave's removed Dr Strange from the line-up, added Hellcat from THE AVENGERS, as well as the mysteri ous Moon Knight from the late WEREWOLF BY NIGHT series, and started a subplot with the Red Guardian that has culminated with the return of the savage Sub-Mariner. The non-group structure has been reaffirmed by Dave, and now, more than ever, the Defenders is a fluid, viable concept –ever shifting, ever changing, ever interesting

"Who Remembers Scorpio?," the bizarre storyline featuring the return of that villain, is a monument to innovative scripting and advanced pacing Kraft's Scorpio is a man of great depth and sensitivity, marking him as a cleverly uncommon cutthroat The several issue saga (principally told in #'s 48-50, with peripheral portions in #'s 46 and 51) is a compelling drama (as dist nguished with deliberate intent from melodrama). The mind of an aging super-v.llain is masterfully laid bare for all to see It isn't a pleasurable sight, but it's a fascinat ing one, and Dave has handled it beautifully When I distinguished drama from melodrama, a few lines ago, I did it to point up that Kraft's Scorpio is a man not given to the usual histrionics we associate with comic-book baddies He's been "krafted" with an inordinate amount of caring and those of us hungry for a real thinking man's psycho were treated to a veritable feast in those offbeat issues of THE DEFENDERS

Dave is proving as unpredictable as Gerber himself, keeping us off balance by tossing wildly diverse storylines at us with startling regularity "A Round With the Ringer" (in #51) presents the Valkyrie with a whole new set of problems, as she

Scorpio's soliloquies by DAVE (the Dude) KRAFT (from #'s 48-50).

prepares to attend college And, all the while, Nighthawk is having a free for all with the newest nut from the Kraft consciousness. the Ringer This bozo (pardon me, Steve) has got to be seen to be believed. From the absurdly insane to the absurdly comical has DAK moved with fine timing. I'm happy There's as much infectuous activity going on in DEFENDERS as ever in its history And Dave the Dude has only begun.

On the other hand, *I'm* just about finished

THE DEFENDERS lends itself to speculation, conjecture, and rampant prognostication There's nary a book in the Marvel line-up with which you can have as much fun, just by wondering what will be happening in even a few short issues THE DEFENDERS .s definitely not a predictable series. It's an eternally intriguing mag, and one

A MAN MUST MEET HIS OWN FINAL DEFEAT WITH CLASS, WITH PANACHE HAVEN'T I ALWAYS SAID THAT ?
I GUESS, AT LEAST AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, THIS IS ONE SURE WAY TO SOLVE THE WORLD'S PROBLEMS AND MY OWN.
GOODBYE, NICK

that, despite its continued high sales and popularity, still puzzles me somewhat merely by its continued existence. I was intrigued and peculiarly affected by the first few issues, and my fascination continues even today I can't really explain .t any further THE DEFENDERS is *still* an enigma

I remember a fan letter of mine (published in DEFENDERS #29), in which I enthused "I haven't read a single bad issue " And now, after enjoying in excess of fifty issues of the dynam c DEFENDERS, I still wouldn't change that line the slightest bit

—Ralph Macchio

THE OLD ...

Our Pal SAL BUSCEMA penciled and inked this dazzling display of the original non-team members getting their feet wet.

DEFENDERS

ISSUE #	DATE	TITLE	WRITER	PENCILLER	INKER	PP
1	8/72	*I Slay By the Stars*	Steve Englehart	Sal Buscema	Frank Giacoia	20
2	10/72	*The Secret of the Silver Surfer*	Steve Englehart	Sal Buscema	John Verpoorten	20
3	12/72	*Four Against the Gods*	Steve Englehart	Sal Buscema	Jim Mooney	20
4	2/73	*The New Defenders*	Steve Englehart	Sal Buscema	Frank McLaughlin	20
5	4/73	*World Without End?*	Steve Englehart	Sal Buscema	Frank McLaughlin	20
6	6/73	*The Dreams of Death*	Steve Englehart	Sal Buscema	Frank McLaughlin	20
7	8/73	*War Below the Waves*	Steve Englehart Len Wein	Sal Buscema	Frank Bolle	19
8	9/73	*If Atlantis Should Fall*	Steve Englehart	Sal Buscema	Frank McLaughlin	19
9	10/73	*Divide and Conquer*	Steve Englehart	Sal Buscema	Frank McLaughlin	19
10	11/73	*Breakthrough! The Incredible Hulk vs. the Mighty Thor*	Steve Englehart	Sal Buscema	Frank Bolle	19
11	12/73	*A Dark and Stormy Night*	Steve Englehart	Sal Buscema	Frank Bolle	19
12	2/74	*The Titan Strikes Back*	Len Wein	Sal Buscema	Jack Abel	19
13	5/74	*For Sale: One Planet, Slightly Used*	Len Wein	Sal Buscema	Klaus Janson	19
14	7/74	*And Who Shall Inherit the Earth?*	Len Wein	Sal Buscema	Dan Green	
15	9/74	*Panic Beneath the Earth*	Len Wein	Sal Buscema	Klaus Janson	18
16	10/74	*Alpha, The Ultimate Mutant*	Len Wein	Sal Buscema	Mike Esposito	18
17	11/74	*Power Play*	Len Wein	Sal Buscema	Dan Green	18
18	12/74	*Rampage*	Len Wein	Sal Buscema	Dan Green	17
19	1/75	*Doombat*	Len Wein Chris Claremont	Sal Buscema	Klaus Janson	
20	2/75	*The Woman She Was*	Steve Gerber	Sal Buscema	Vince Colletta	
21	3/75	*Enter The Headman*	Steve Gerber	Sal Buscema	Sal Trapani	18
22	4/75	*Fangs of Fire and Blood*	Steve Gerber	Sal Buscema	Mike Esposito	18
23	5/75	*The Snakes Shall Inherit the Earth*	Steve Gerber	Sal Buscema	Vince Colletta	
24	6/75	*In the Jaws of the Serpent*	Steve Gerber	Sal Buscema	Bob McLeod	18
25	7/75	*The Serpent Sheds Its Skin*	Steve Gerber	Sal Buscema	Jack Abel	18
26	8/75	*Savage Time*	Steve Gerber	Sal Buscema	Vince Colletta	18
27	9/75	*Three Worlds to Conquer*	Steve Gerber	Sal Buscema	Vince Colletta	8
28	0/75	*My Mother The Badoon*	Steve Gerber	Sal Buscema	Frank Giacoia John Tartaglione	8
29	/75	*Let My Planet Go*	Steve Gerber	Sal Buscema	Vince Colletta	8
30	2/75	*Gold Diggers of Fear*	Bill Mantlo	Sam Kramer	Jack Abel	8
31	76	*Nighthawk's Brain*	Steve Gerber	Sal Buscema	Jim Mooney	18
32	2/76	*Musical Minds*	Steve Gerber	Sal Buscema	Jim Mooney	18
33	3/76	*Webbed Hands, Warm Heart*	Steve Gerber	Sal Buscema	Jim Mooney	17
34	4/76	*I Think We're All Bozos in This Book*	Steve Gerber	Sal Buscema	Jim Mooney	17
35	5/76	*Bring Back My Body To Me, To Me*	Steve Gerber	Sal Buscema	Klaus Janson	17
36	6/76	*A Garden of Earthly Demise*	Mary Skrenes Steve Gerber	Sal Buscema	Klaus Janson	7
37	7/76	*Exile in Bloom*	Steve Gerber	Sal Buscema	Klaus Janson	7
38	8/76	*Exile in Oblivion*	Steve Gerber	Sal Buscema	Klaus Janson	7
39	9/76	*Riot in Cellblock 12*	Steve Gerber	Sal Buscema	Klaus Janson	7
40	10/76	*Love, Anarchy and Oh Yes, the Assassin*	Steve Gerber	Sal Buscema	Klaus Janson	7
41	11/76	*Intruder in the Sand*	Steve Gerber	Sal Buscema	Klaus Janson	7
42	12/76	*And in This Corner The New Emissaries of Evil*	Gerry Conway	Keith Giffen	Klaus Janson	7

... AND THE NEW!

Kreative KEITH GIFFEN and Royal MIKE ROYER combined efforts to present this mind-blowing dramatization of the latest line-up rising from the ruins.

CHECKLIST

ISSUE #	DATE	TITLE	WRITER	PENCILLER	INKER	PP
43	1 77	*The [illegible] Maze*	Gerry Conway	Keith Giffen	Klaus Janson	17
44	2 77	*Rage of the Reach*	David Kraft Roger Slifer	Keith Giffen	Klaus Janson	17
45	3 77	*Free the Defenders*	David Kraft Roger Slifer	Keith Giffen	Klaus Janson	17
46	4 77	*[illegible]*	David Kraft Roger Slifer	Keith Giffen	Klaus Janson	17
47	5 77	*Night Moves*	John Warner	Keith Giffen	Klaus Janson	17
48	6	*Sinister Solstice*	David Kraft	Keith Giffen	Dan Green	17
49	7 77	*Rage*	David Kraft	Keith Giffen	Mike Royer	17
50	8	*Stalk the Die*	David Kraft	Keith Giffen	Keith Giffen	17
51	9	*[illegible] Hulk Berserker*	David Kraft	Keith Giffen	Klaus Janson	17
52	10 77	*Defenders of the Realm*	David Kraft	Keith Giffen	Chic Stone	17
53	11	*[illegible] Presence*	David Kraft	Dave Cockrum Keith Giffen Mike Golden	Terry Austin	17
54	2	*[illegible]*	David Kraft	Keith Giffen Mike Golden	Bob McLeod	12
55	8	*[illegible]*	David Kraft	Carmine Infantino	Klaus Janson	17
56	3 78	*[illegible]*	David Kraft	Carmine Infantino	Klaus Janson	18
57	3 78	*[illegible]*	[illegible]	George Tuska		17
58	4 78	*[illegible]*	David Kraft	Ed Hannigan	Klaus Janson	17
59	5 78	*[illegible]*	David Kraft	Ed Hannigan	Klaus Janson	
60	6 78	*Revenge of Vera Cruz*	David Kraft	Ed Hannigan	Klaus Janson	17

GIANT SIZE DEFENDERS

	74	*The Way They Were* (Prologue)	Tony Isabella	Jim Starlin	Al Milgrom	3
		Part 1 *Banished to Outer Space*	(Reprinted from *Incredible Hulk #3*)			12
		Part 2 *[illegible]*	(Reprinted from Sub-Mariner #4 August 1955, Story and art by Bill Everett)			5
		Part 3 *[illegible]*	(Reprinted from Strange Tales #145			10
		Part 4 *[illegible]*	[illegible]	Jim Starlin	Al Milgrom	4
2	74	*Hats In Hulk, Hell and Hangovers*	Len Wein	Gil Kane	Klaus Janson	12
		Chapter 2 [illegible]				9
		Chapter 3 *Sandgame*				9
3	/75	*Games Godlings Play*	Steve Gerber	Jim Starlin	Dan Adkins/ Don Newton. Jim Mooney	9 6 9
4	4/76	*Two Out of Night for Dying*	Steve Gerber	Don Heck	Vince Colletta	10
		Chapter 2 [illegible]				12
		Chapter 3 *Heat in Darkness*				8
5	7 7	*Four Moves [illegible]*	Steve Gerber	Don Heck	Mike Esposito	32
	76	*Roots Grow Sour*	Steve Gerber	Sal Buscema	Klaus Janson	35

Department of FOOMation

A sneak peek at an original pencil-art panel of the evil Agent of Fortune as envisioned by Energetic ED HANNIGAN for Defenders #58.

STEVE GERBER

Editor/Writer: HOWARD THE DUCK

"HOWARD THE DUCK #19 is the conclusion of his experience as a human being. In #20, he's completely on his own in New York and looking for a job. The villain is Sudd, the scrubbing bubble that walks like a man and thinks like Anita Bryant. In #21, Howard's still in New York and facing the menace of the sinister Sooft. It's an acronym for Save Our Offspring From Indecency. There will also be a new character introduced called Beverly Switzler. Issue #'s 22 and 23 will have the big reunion with Dakimh and Man-Thing, Korrek and Jennifer, in which Howard fulfils his destiny to save the Universe. The villain in those two issues is Berserk Joe, who is the Master of the Universe. HTD #'s 22

Gentleman GENE COLAN

and 23 will be drawn by *Val Mayerick*

"After issue #23, there's a possibility that someone else will be writing the regular HTD comic, under my editorial direction, while I launch an amazing, all new HOWARD THE DUCK magazine in the KISS format forty pages of full-color comics, with painted covers by *Jim Starlin*. It will probably be a test title, at first, with approximately thirty-four pages of Howard comics material, and a six-page back-up feature, which I haven't quite decided on yet Actually, the Duck story may vary in length The magazine section will be printed on slick paper and will also be in color, featuring articles on almost everything, as well as original short fiction That's basically all I can say about it now It'll be $1 50, and it'll also be slightly more sophisticated than the regular comic book

"As for the daily HTD newspaper strip, the second story starts the first of September, and runs nine weeks, featuring the return of the Cult of Entropy Following that, the next story will start sometime around November We're going to do a two-week sequence on Howard's origin and the return of Arthur Winslow and his ex-wife, and a character called the Self-Made Man Howard goes into the Puritan Ethic Employment Agency, where he meets an

Archie Bunker-type who says all the jobs are being taken—first by the blacks, then the women, and now by ducks!

I'm also doing a new Man-Thing story, dealing with a girl who has multiple personalities It'll either appear in the new title, or as a back-up in THE RAMPAGING HULK It's twenty-one pages, and will be drawn by *Jim Mooney*."

ARCHIE GOODWIN

Editor: AVENGERS — CAPTAIN MARVEL — DAREDEVIL — DEFENDERS — DR. STRANGE — GODZILLA — GHOST RIDER — HUMAN FLY — IRON MAN — MAN FROM ATLANTIS — MARVEL TEAM-UP — MASTER OF KUNG FU — MS. MARVEL — SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN — X-MEN — POWERMAN/IRON FIST

On the agenda for appearance soon is our biggest new color comic yet THE MAN FROM ATLANTIS, adapted from the TV series of the same title It'll be 80 pages of pure excitement for $1 Boisterous *Bill Mantlo* is scripting, with Titanic *Tom Sutton* and Fearless *Frank Robbins* pushing the pencils. After issue #1, the title will revert to a regular 35¢ format, with Fearless Frank as artist, but there'll be another super-size special again next summer

This spiffy new series could be the beginning of a *Marvelous* menagerie of terrific TV titles to appear in the madcap months ahead, so stay tuned for further developments, tube fans

"We're also working on a masterful movie adaptation to be done in the same far out 80-page format as the first MAN FROM ATLANTIS issue The movie CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND—the latest shocking *Steven Spielberg* spectacular (He's the guy who directed JAWS, just in case ya didn't know, folks!) The adaptation is scheduled by be written by your editor-in-chief (myself!) Artful *Archie Goodwin*, with the artistic chores handled by Stellar *Jim Starlin* and Kinky *Klaus Janson*.

THE CHAMPIONS has been suspended as of ish #19, unfortunately, but longtime Marvelites know all too well that we have the kinda characters that just plain refuse to fade away, so don't be surprised if this sensational supergroup comes bouncin' back atcha sometime in the not-too-distant future, when you least expect it

In the super-hero splashed pages of THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN, the Brother Power/Sister Sun storyline is spinning its way into a fantastic four-issue saga! In addition to the pulse-pounding premiere of the very first down home super hero—known as Razorback—you can expect to see Spidey and Flash Thompson teamed with this new sensation against the aforementioned villainous duo, who are in league with the Hate-Monger (and wait'll you see who ol' Hatey really is!)

CHRIS CLAREMONT

"In MARVEL TEAM-UP, for a change of pace, after having done four

Cheerful CHRIS CLAREMONT

two-issue stories in a row, we'll do a series of one-shots Man-Thing, Tigra, Kraven—and the surprise TEAM-UP of all time! Beyond that, we'll probably feature some of the X-Men, or maybe all of them, and then perhaps Power Man

"Speaking of POWER-MAN, we're going to establish his status as a criminal/non-criminal once and for all We're not sure what direction it's going to go, except stark survival Once we've cleared up Cage's past, and gotten him and Iron Fist together, we're going to do our best to present a series of knock-down drag-out, exciting, adventurous stories. The emphasis will be on character, plot and action. With the character mix we've got, and the basic characterizational conflict of Luke Cage vs Danny Rand, we've easily got enough to go on! The fiftieth issue will feature the return of Stiletto and Discus, and will probably be the last time you'll see any old Power Man villains, for a long time. There's a possible team-up with Ms. Marvel in the offing. The future storyline will involve a protection racket in

Titanic TOM SUTTON

Harlem that uses robots as runners. The rationale being, how do you arrest a robot—let alone convict him?

"Now that we've cleared up who MS MARVEL is, what she is, and where she's going, we'll just do a series of good, solid stories, centered on Carol and the Bugle. *Jim Mooney* is back on the book as artist, although there's a one-shot job by *Carmine*. We'll soon have a new Steeplejack as a villain. After that, there'll be a two-parter involving Wondarr, Nita and Tiger Shark. Somewhere along the line there will also be an interesting story involving Arkon. And, even further in the future, is a plotline involving the Grand Master, fighting the one person that even *he* can't defeat.

And, now that we've finished the cosmic epic in THE X-MEN, we're going to pull in our horns a little and concentrate on character. Sooner or later, in the next six months, the book will hopefully go monthly! There will be a fill-in art job by *Tony DeZuniga*, which will probably appear in #110. We'll be introducing a Canadian superhero in #109. We have no name for him yet, so I want to announce a Name-the-Hero Contest! All entries from fearless FOOMers are hereby solicited and are welcome at once! We'll be doing some X-MEN one-shot issues, then the Beast will guest-star for a few issues, as he starts to resolve his conflict in THE AVENGERS. There will be the return of a famous old villain, who must for the moment remain nameless. The X-MEN will probably go to Japan and get involved with Sun Fire. Peter Rasputin will be reunited with his grandparents. They will not go to Russia to do it though, because everyone else in the Marvel Universe seems to be going to Russia these days. Beyond that, there are a couple of surprises in store. For those who are interested, the X-Men will return to the Savage Land, and they'll also eventually meet Thor.

SCOTT EDELMAN

"In CAPTAIN MARVEL, the big news about the creative team is that *Keith Pollard* and *Bob Wiacek* will take over on the art chores as of #55. In that issue, Captain Marvel will battle Wonder Man and the Space Phantom. Upcoming: Eon will come back to find out why Captain Marvel hasn't been protecting the Universe. Quite possibly, Cap's secret identity will be established as assistant director of the Hayden Planetarium."

DOUG MOENCH

"*Herb Trimpe* has drawn issue of #7 of GODZILLA. It's the first introduction of a Samurai-type robot, based on the Japanese cartoon character Raideen. The monster robot is designed to kill Godzilla. Ish #8 will have the first fight between the two. In the long range, I plan to have Godzilla emerge from the iceberg that has floated all the way across the Pacific and eventually he will probably reach New York. There will be guest stars, like S.H.I.E.L.D.—and eventually we'll get around to the *Origin. Phase Two.* In the all-new GODZILLA TREASURY, we'll be doing an adaptation of the movie GODZILLA ON THE ISLAND OF MONSTERS.

'MASTER OF KUNG FU #'s 59 and 60 are a two-parter by *Mike Zeck*, in which they get involved in some bizarre dreams that are mingled with reality. Then, there's an unscheduled *Pat Broderick* fill-in. *Jim Craig* is the regular artist, of course, and he just did #61, titled 'Glass Orchids,' vaguely inspired by 'Terry and the Pirates.' It involves piracy, smuggling and adventure, and it has Lieko, Pavayne, Shang-Chi and some new characters. Juliet will be subsidized by Shen Kuei, the Cat. In Chinese, those words—Shen Kuei mean 'good' and 'evil.' Issue #62 is called 'Red Seas.'"

JIM SHOOTER

"In THE AVENGERS, *George Perez* and I are already pretty well launched on our twelve-issue epic. I'm happy that George decided to stay on the series as artist and do it. He opted to work on THE AVENGERS, as opposed to the FANTASTIC FOUR, mostly, I think, for the greater variety of characters he'd get to draw. We'll try to keep the same creative team on the book right down to the colorist, for the next twelve issues. We're going to guest star almost everybody. There will be several two- and three-issue sequences, one of which will be about the Collector. This all starts with issue #167. We have an idea for wrapping up The Champions, when they guest star, since their series has been discontinued. Also, we will be introducing Ms. Marvel into the ranks of Avengers, around ish #170. In #'s 168 and 169 we'll be introducing yet another dynamic female, to help offset the male dominance of the group. *Pablo Marcos* will remain as inker. *Phil Rachelson* as colorist, *Denise Wohl* as letterer and Archie, inevitably, as editor. The Guardians of the Galaxy will kind of serve as a framing sequence for the epic. The Avengers will be traveling a lot—to Pittsburgh, of all places, where they will cross-over with GHOST RIDER, without either appearing in the other's book.

"Speaking of GHOST RIDER, since the demise of THE CHAMPIONS book, his ride East has become sort of open-ended. In issue #28, he reaches Phoenix, where he meets the Orb. I have plans for a new villain who he'll meet in Pittsburgh, which is tied in with an old, old villain that Thor met there. I've also been dropping subtle hints in GHOST RIDER that Daredevil might show up, because their earlier team-up was very popular. *Don Perlin* is still the artist on the series. *Dan Green*'s inking—and

doing an excellent job.

"As for DAREDEVIL, *Gil Kane* is drawing issue #61. *Bob Budiansky* will be doing a fill-in, written by *Bill Kunkel*. Issue #151, Gil co-plotted with me, and it establishes a new and interesting direction, with Daredevil becoming more of a humanitarian. The next couple issues will find him devoting himself more to others' grief. He'll be rescuing Debbie Harris from herself; and there will be a new woman in his life.

several new women, in fact, and a couple of surprises. Gil also wants to do a several-issue epic people will look back on and talk about for years to come."

DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT

Editor/Writer: FOOM — MARVEL CALENDAR — MARVEL COMICS SUPER SPECIAL — SPIDEY SUPER STORIES

"As you've already no doubt noticed, FOOM has a lively new look, in the flashy form of slick, full-color covers! The special *Stan Lee* issue (#17), sporting a sensational poster painting on premium paperstock, was an experiment of sorts. And, since the bright and colorful cover made such a smashing impression, we decided that, from now on, each-and-every issue of fandom's favorite fan mag will arrive decked out in resplendent and snazzily-slick color covers! Not only that, but the addition of these selfsame razzmatastic wrappers means the equivalent of an extra *four pages* of far-out FOOM features are now to be found in every ish! So who says we aren't always attempting to offer the best possible bargain, as well as the best blamed fanzine, to our faithful and far flung legions— the frantic *Friends Of Ol' Marvel!*

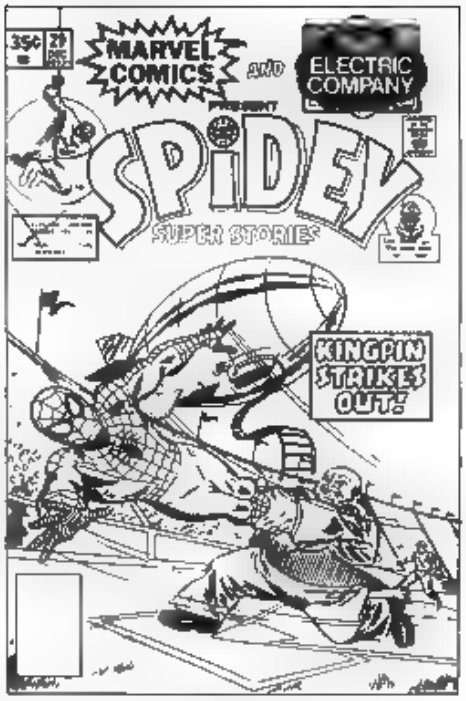
"Meanwhile, on the major magazine front, big news is breaking fast! The first pandemonious, precedent-shattering issue of MARVEL COMICS SUPER SPECIAL (starring *Kiss*) has set records and shot to success on numerous newsstands across the nation. Not only is the format frankly fabulous— full size and full color, quality paper and quality reproduction -but the book is equally innovative in introducing a nifty new concept: *rock comics!* In other words, mighty Marvel is entering an exciting new era, and you madcap music mavens are in for enjoyment unlimited in the months to come. Stan the Man has enlisted my modest-but-eager expertise to write, edit and produce an awesome ensemble of assorted new editions of SUPER SPECIAL in the near future— and I'm dancin' with delight at the sheer prospects we already have in store! Each ish will be a splendid special edition, studded with superstars. A masterful media event complete unto itself. I'm dying to drop names, but I'm sworn to solid-gold secrecy, 'cause we're still nestled in negotiations with the ranks of really top-notch rock'n'rollers. So stay tuned for a sensational series of announcements sometime soon, fellow FOOMers! And be assured that your favorite artists—in the fields of both rock and comics—will be appearing in the platinum pages of MARVEL COMICS SUPER SPECIAL.

"I can, however, make mention of one extremely-outstanding ish, presently in the planning stages—a breathtaking and truly titanic tribute to those brilliant lads from Liverpool whose lively effects were felt the world over, the fantastic foursome who formed the phenomenon known as—THE BEATLES! Positively guaranteed to be a blockbuster, gang!

Stellar JIM STARLIN's splashy UFO cover scene.

"The noteworthy 1978 MIGHTY MARVEL CALENDAR (starring the Amazing Spider-Man), which was previewed in these pulsatin' pages just last issue, should be available in better bookstores everywhere by now. Which means I might as well waste no time tellin' ya that the cataclysmic fifth annual calendar—for 1979—is scheduled to star the magnificent mint-colored monster called the Hulk. Once again, I'll act as editor, co-writing the chronological compendium of the Hulk's career with Slim *Jim Salicrup*. And, as always, we'll employ the talents of Marvel's all-time ace illustrators to produce the peerless pin-ups you've come to expect from the Original House of Ideas. So, while it's still a full year away, it's never to early to awaken yearnings, especially since the forthcoming 1979 calendar is destined to be the best darned one we've done yet!

"Speaking of exemplary excellence, Energetic *Ed Hannigan* has been outdoing himself with illustrative ingenuity, of late, on the Devil Slayer issues of THE DEFENDERS. The story, originally scheduled as a two-parter, is now slated to be a three-part mini-series (*a/a* "Who Remembers Scorpio?" and "The Power Principle"). The special effects are sensational and, as of this writing, Energetic Ed is tentatively slated as the star artist on future issues. I'm all for it, as I appreciate Ed's ever growing artistic acumen—and with kinky *Klaus Janson* inking, how can it miss? As for the



specific storyline following the Devil Slayer series, it'll be a superb and spectacular sequence of events, but I'm not going to say a great deal more. I've already revealed several of the individual elements in earlier issues of FOOM, but I want the particulars of the plot to remain secret.

"Also, for the color comics, I've scripted a six-page offbeat feature, titled "Mindgame!" It's penciled by *Mike Golden*, and has yet to be scheduled for publication, but it includes a most bizarre match: Deathlok the Demolisher *versus* Lassie the Death-Dog! It'll probably appear someplace where you least expect it, so be on the lookout, bionic boosters!

"I'd also like to enthuse here about my spiffy special project for MARVEL PREVIEW #13, which Roguish *Roger Slifer* also mentions in his scintillatin' section. It's a 35-page UFO saga, enigmatically entitled "The Cosmic Connection," conceived and written by yours truly, in conjunction with the incredible illustrative abilities of Happy *Herb Trimpe*, a tremendously-talented storytelling titan I have long admired. And it's dramatic dynamite! Plus, it's packaged behind a powerful cover painting by Stellar *Jim Starlin!* Take a peak, pilgrim—I promise it's well worth your while!

"SPIDEY SUPER STORIES, the simple but snappy series for those potential comic-book culture lovers who are just learning to read, is chock full of Electric Company characters, as well as teaming with a multitude of mighty Marvel guest-stars and super villains. 'Scan an issue and see for yourself,' says scripter Slim *Jim Salicrup* with a smile. Together, the two of us oversee the elementary educational efforts of the Children's Television Workshop on this trippy and treasured title.

"And that's still not all, FOOM fans! But, gee, I've gotta save *something* to yap about next issue."

JACK KIRBY

Editor/Writer/Artist: BLACK PANTHER — DINOSAURS — MISTER MACHINE

"THE ETERNALS has been discontinued. I'm sorry to see it go. I liked it a lot, but I think the market today is geared more to simple characters. THE ETERNALS is a concept. The characters are secondary to the concept. THE FANTASTIC FOUR took about ten years. THE ETERNALS could make a comeback, of course. I think the gods are going to be with us a long time. After all, THE HULK was discontinued when it first began, and it came back, and is now one of the biggest stars.

"As for the BLACK PANTHER, what I'm going to do is explore the roots of the Panther. It's a fascinating concept, because his African tribe was given guardianship of this mound of vibranium, which is from another world - there's no metal like it on Earth. It's of cosmic origin, and what the mound is, we don't know. I'm going to explore the beginnings of it. But the most important thing now is the ancestry of the Black Panther, himself. I've already introduced the half brother of T'Challa, and there's a conflict between them. He has been experimenting with vibranium, while the Panther has been dealing with the world. He'll be around for a few issues and lead us to the ancestors of the Panther Cult, which has never really been explored.

"MR. MACHINE is going to star in a book, and he represents a minority of one: he's a machine and a human, at the same time. His trouble is that he's he's going to have difficulty establishing

himself as a part of society. The trouble is, he has two identities, and one conflicts with the other. He's going to have to adjust to what he is. If you pull his mask off, then he doesn't know who he is—his face is the only identity he has. Taking it away is like taking away a man's humanity. In terms of powers, he can handle any situation that arises. He has mechanisms that can handle anything. His mechanisms can also sometimes help him to find sympathy among humans. He's a computer, too. Here's a guy who can't sleep, can't shut himself off, can't eat or love as we do—and, yet, he's one of us.

"In 2001, I was searching for Mr. Machine. He is definitely part of the Marvel Universe—he moves in the Marvel Universe. So look for guest stars and new characters and a lot of pliability. I think that's what the readers will want. You'll be seeing a lot of very good stories.

"I also have a new dinosaur book forthcoming, as yet untitled. It's an interesting concept, too, because it puts dinosaurs in another light. They're not the mindless, savage animals that we think—they're sympathetic and very human. The dinosaur is the central character—the series is about the dinosaur and his association with man. It takes place at the dawn of man. The dinosaur was here on Earth for 730 million years, much longer than man. Man is a user. He has to establish a rapport with the dinosaur, and they more or less help each other. The human character is going to surprise the heck out of you. It'll be something that hasn't been done, sympathetic, but fascinating."

ROGER SLIFER

Editor: MARVEL PREVIEW — RAMPAGING HULK

"Upcoming in MARVEL PREVIEW are some very interesting and unique issues. For instance, in PREVIEW #13, for the very first time ever, Marvel explores the real life phenomenon of *Unidentified Flying Objects*—their uncanny origins, their insidious effects, and the hair raising hypothesis surrounding their sightings. And, in addition to the fantastic feature-length story by *Dave* (the Dude) *Kraft* and Happy *Herb Trimpe*, the issue also features eyewitness accounts of actual UFO sightings by President *Jimmy Carter*, *John Lennon* and many other neo-notables—plus other informative articles and fact packed features (not to mention a sterling cover by *Starlin*).

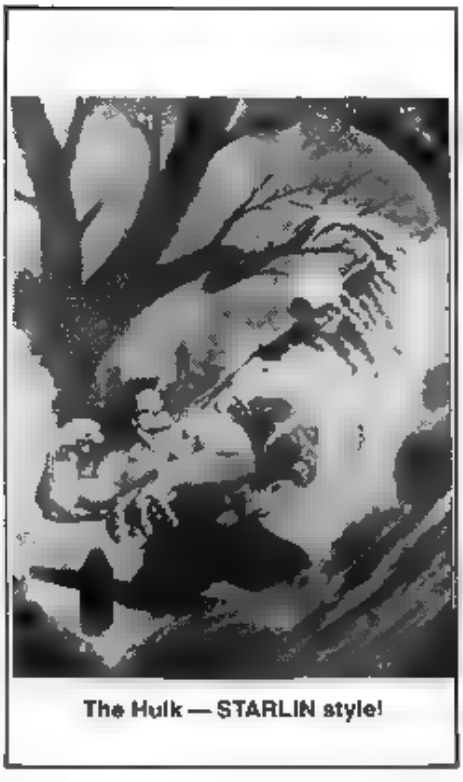
"Also, as soon as our splendid staff has time enough to stop for a breath of air and attend to the launching of a new and eerie addition to our magazine line, we intend to unveil TALES OF TERROR—our answer to those countless requests to reinstate a horror mag to our line. It'll feature fear fraught fables starring all of your old favorites: DRACULA! MAN-THING! LILITH, THE DAUGHTER OF DRACULA! BROTHER VOODOO! GABRIEL, THE DEVIL HUNTER! THE ZOMBIE! Yes, all these and many more, as rendered by your favorite writers—*Wolfman*, *Gerber*, *Kraft*, *Moench* and all the rest! Why do we mention this new mag, while we're still talking about MARVEL PREVIEW? Because that's where the initial issue of TALES OF TERROR will probably makes its debut, before becoming a full-fledged new mag all on its own.

"Also, for the forthcoming horror title, Doug and *Vincente Alcazar* collaborated on an all-new, all-great team-up between Moon Knight and Brother Voodoo.

"And, finally, there's another prestigious project in the works so secret that we can't tell you too much about it yet! But we will give you another little hint to add to the one from "Final FOOM Flashes," last ish: not only it is written and drawn by the truly titanic team that made a color comic called THE MASTER OF KUNG FU a top seller, but it stars a stunning, sensational, secretive and mysterious new MS! Trust us—it's gonna be great!

"THE RAMPAGING HULK #8, by Devil-May-Care *Doug Moench* and Klobberin' *Keith Pollard*, picks up right after the Metal Master adventure, which took place inside Beret's bag—the spacial distorter. The villain is a combination of all the spirits of Beret's dead techno-art creations, which were destroyed inside her bag. It's sole purpose is to kill Beret. Also, *Paul Gulacy* did a Hulk cover painting for a future issue.

"As for the MARVEL CLASSICS, Doug just did 'A Christmas Carol.' And he'll be doing 'Robin Hood' and 'Alice in Wonderland.' There's a possibility that American artists may illustrate one or both of these. Dauntless *Don McGregor* adapted 'The Prince and the Pauper.'"



The Hulk — STARLIN style!

ROY THOMAS

Editor/Writer: CONAN THE BARBARIAN — INVADERS — KULL THE DESTROYER — MARVEL PREMIERE — RED SONJA — SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN — STAR WARS — TARZAN — WHAT IF . . .?

"In TARZAN, LORD OF THE JUNGLE, I'm finishing up the adaptation of THE JEWELS OF OPAR. After that will follow a couple stories that are now on the shelf, adapted from Edgar Rice Burroughs' JUNGLE TALES OF TARZAN stories that were not in the ANNUAL and that have not been adapted in recent years. After that, I'm kind of undecided about whether I'll adapt TARZAN THE TERRIBLE, or TARZAN AND THE GOLDEN LION or TARZAN AT THE EARTH'S CORE. I may not adapt them in order, in which case I'll probably do EARTH'S CORE, because that has all the stuff at Pellucidar, and I'd like to maybe spin that series off eventually into a separate Pellucidar title. There may be a couple of original issues in between, if I get in the mood—but, basically, I'm interested in doing these adaptations first. Then, later, making up original stories of my own. *John Buscema* is definitely the permanent artist, although I don't know about the inker, as yet.

"After the three CONAN THE BARBARIAN issues by *Howie Chaykin*, Conan will be resuming his quest to find Belit's father. There will be a lot of strange things happening in this title over the next year or so, but I don't know what they are just yet.

"In the SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN black-and-white magazine, there are several issues coming up by a number of different artists, including *Howie Chaykin, Dick Giordano, Frank Brunner* and, of course, *John Buscema* and *Gil Kane*. There will be a special Christmas issue of SAVAGE SWORD that will be $1.50, in the same format as the MARVEL COMICS SUPER SPECIAL that featured KISS. That will be an original story, by Buscema and me, but I don't yet know what the other features of the book will be.

"*John Buscema* and I are supposed to start the Conan newspaper strip soon, to appear in January. The initial plotline will be about Conan and a girl who is fleeing from a wizard. It will be both a daily and a Sunday strip.

"CAPTAIN AMERICA #260 is a reprint, although I did one new page for it. There will be a couple-issue break, during which I'll handle the editing and co-plotting while *Don Glut* writes a couple issues for me. The storyline will start with "Who is Steve Rogers?" Captain America discovers, in the issue that *George Tuska* did, that he cannot remember back beyond 1941, when Steve Rogers walked into that room and drank the serum. Thus, he has an identity crisis. I'm having the Falcon become the leader of this group, which I was originally planning to present as a separate comic—The Super Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. -and which will include the Texas Twister (from the FF). The artist for issue #259 will be *George Tuska*; the reprint in issue #260 is drawn by *Jack Kirby*; #261 will be by *John Buscema*; and then *Sal Buscema* is scheduled to become regular artist.

Brooklyn-born Brian Moore's rapturous rendering of Conan the Barbarian.

along with *Joe Sinnott* as inker

"In the pages of THE INVADERS, in the next couple months, I'll be dealing with the Scarlet Scarab, who is Egyptian I don't know whether to call him a super-hero or a super villain because he's somewhere in between. After that, the Invaders will come back to the U.S., where Toro, who has been hurt in action, is to be saved The only one who can save his life is a Japanese-American doctor in a detention camp in California. *Frank Robbins* is still the regular artist, and *Frank Springer* is the inker.

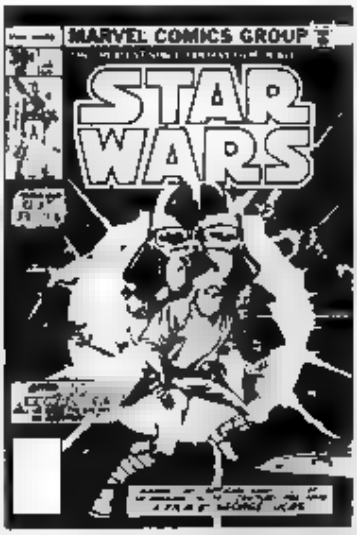
"Presently, I'm also editor of WHAT IF. ? I'm going to write some issues and edit the others. *Don Glut* is working on one, suggested mainly by the readers —what if Rick Jones had become the Hulk? What if Conan came to the Twentieth Century?—an inevitable premise—will appear soon, drawn by *John Buscema*. *Rick Hoberg* is penciling one—what if someone else had been bitten by the radioactive spider? For a back-up feature, in that issue, I'm working on a funny animal story called "Man-Spider," (no relation to the Man-Spider in this year's SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL)

"I will be doing the Liberty Legion and Almuric stories soon, in MARVEL PREMIERE. *Tim Conrad* inked the Almuric stories As for the Liberty Legion, *Don Heck* did the first and *Rick Hoberg* the second of a two-parter

"The RED SONJA team remains the same—*Clara Noto* and I will write it, and *Frank Thorne* will do the art. There will also be a regular RED SONJA back up feature in the SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN—some of the stories will be by *Frank Thorne*, with others by *Dick Giordano* and *Howie Chaykin*

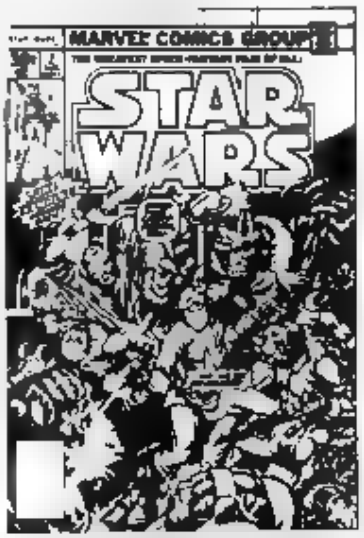
"KULL THE DESTROYER will continue with *Don Glut*, *Ernie Chan* and *Rudy Nebres* as the creative team Kull will have a confrontation with Thulsa Doom over the throne."

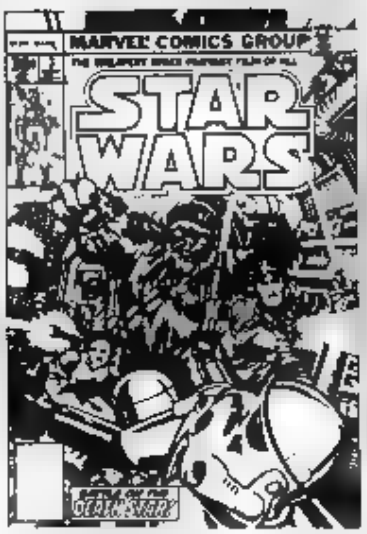
Spotlight on STAR WARS



"My future plans for STAR WARS are to do an original story, inspired by some of *George Lucas'* unused material. *Howie Chaykin* and I are already doing the story, which deals mostly with Han Solo and Chewbacca the Wookie We're waiting to learn what the second STAR WARS movie will be about, and they've not told us yet, so at this point we're going to do that aforementioned separate adventure with Solo and Chewbacca. The original story will probably span at least three issues—because it takes a whole issue just to get into it, and then it'll take another couple issues to get out of it, at least

"Also, three pages of a new STAR WARS story are appearing, along with three pages of TARZAN, in every issue of PIZZAZZ, Marvel's new magazine In these issues, I'll be concentrating on the other characters—the two robots, Luke Skywalker and Princess Leah The art will be by *Howie Chaykin* and *Tony De Zuniga*."





LEN WEIN

Editor/Writer: FANTASTIC FOUR — INCREDIBLE HULK — AMAZING SPIDER-MAN — THOR

"I think I'm going to be changing the direction of THE INCREDIBLE HULK, again. The New York thing has been working well, to some degree, but I think I've locked myself in. At the moment, I'm sort of winging it, issue by issue, despite the fact that I had long range plans. I sort of put those on the back burner, and where they fit in, fine, where they don't, I'm coming up with new story ideas. Now, I have the Hulk meeting Robinson Crusoe. The Barracuda is the villain.

"Thor's coming back to Earth in THE MIGHTY THOR #267, and he'll be on Earth for a year or two. I'll do some more new Earth villains, as well as some old Earth villains. I think he'll eventually team up with Iron Man. I'll also be bringing in Prester John, and they'll explore Avalon, which was never really explored. Also, somewhere along the line, when I finally figure out who and what they are, I'm going to reveal what happened to the New Gods introduced way back in issue #203. I want to do a story where Don Blake loses the hammer, and someone else finds it, a several-part story, with no Thor, wherein someone else who is worthy has claimed the magic hammer. After all, the only requirement for that is to be *worthy*, to possess the power of Thor. It never said on the hammer that anyone worthy to wield it would *be* Thor, it only said that person would possess his power.

Klobberin' KEITH POLLARD

"The Green Goblin is back in THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN. There may be some more developing between Jameson and Madison, I'm not sure. Jameson is very interesting as a character, and I'm getting into him a lot, really

A pulse-pounding panorama of the mint-colored monster presented by Happy HERB TRIMPE

enjoying him. I'm also going to do some thing with Aunt May, I'm not sure exactly what Peter has been failing his college courses, he's not graduating with the rest of his class In the current issue, he has received a letter from the school saying he can't graduate, so he's working to correct that, which will ultimately lead to a surprise resolution to his college problems. I'm going to mess around with Liz and Harry some more, and their relationship After the Goblin thing, I think I'll have a happy ending for a change! I'm planning to bring back the Rocket Racer and the Fearsome Fly (not to be confused with the Human Fly)

"As for important art changes, *Joe Sinnott* requested a break from the FF, since he has been doing it for so long, so I think issues #'s 189 and 190 will probably be inked by *Pablo Marcos*, while issue #'s 218 and 219 of THE INCREDIBLE HULK will be inked by Joe, who has also inked the current THOR

FANTASTIC FOUR FINISHED FOREVER?

"The FF is breaking up. In issue #189, they will all go their separate ways. They all just say 'bye,' hang up their costumes, and go away The next several months will be in-depth stories on each of the members; they whys and wherefores, where their heads are at, and what they plan to do I'm thinking of sending Ben and Alicia off on a Caribbean cruise, although that's not completely finalized Johnny is going out to the mid-west to do some hot-rod racing and will get involved with water wings Reed is going to play super-scientist, he'll go back to being the brain he was before. I don't know what I'll do with Sue The ideas I had for her, a few years ago, have all been usurped in the meanwhile Most of the elements will occur over the next year, starting with #189 and leading to issue #200—which is twelve issues, one year—and are all part-and parcel of a bigger story"

MARV WOLFMAN

Editor/Writer: MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE — NOVA — TOMB OF DRACULA — WARLORD OF MARS

"In WARLORD OF MARS #7, John Carter meets with the Council of Five for a showdown, and confronts the Great One, who is the leader We're having some fill-ins done on the book, because of lateness and other reasons One of them is by *Dave Cockrum*, and is a flash-back to various times in THE PRINCESS OF MARS novel, such as when John Carter and Dejah Thoris met for the first time It takes it to their marriage, and is a background story that will appear when the sequence with Stara Kahn and the Air Pirates of Mars is over Another fill-in is by *Ross Andru*. It's composed of short stories about the history of Mars, as told by *Edgar Rice Burroughs*. The first one, which is finished, is a five-pager on the Tree of Life. The second and third, which I'm still plotting, will deal with other early elements of Martian history I'm also going to be working up a fill-in book with *Rudy Nebres*, which may eventually appear in an annual This year's JOHN CARTER ANNUAL is already out There will be a two-part cross-over with the TARZAN ANNUAL for next year, 1978. It will be TARZAN ON MARS.

Fearless FRANK GIACOIA

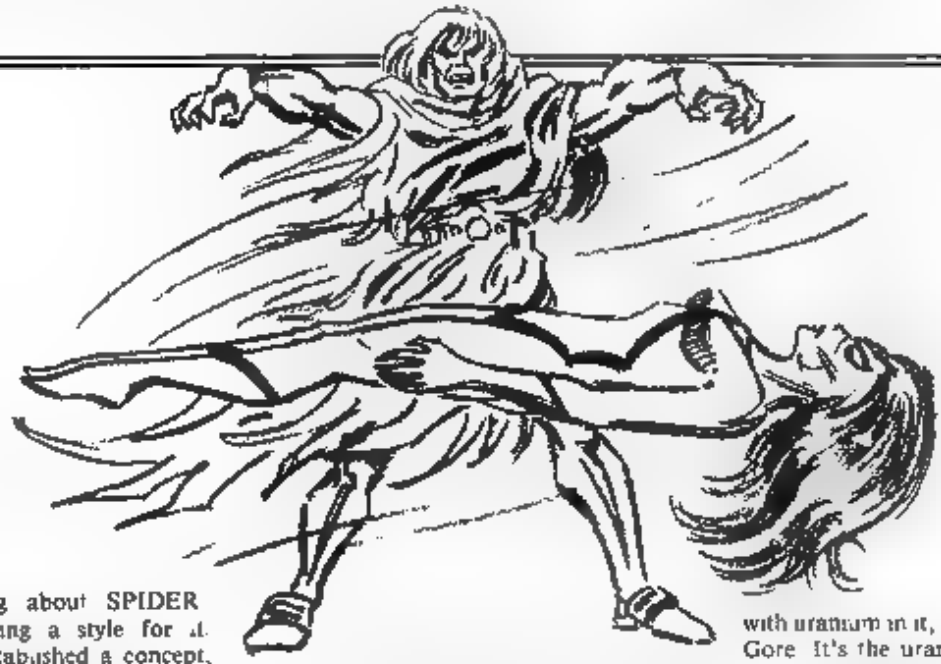
"In TOMB OF DRACULA, Drac goes down to hell and confronts Satan, himself And Satan will do the most incredible thing to Dracula that's happened in the past five hundred years he will take away all of his vampiric qualities! Thus, Dracula goes to seek his

daughter, Lilith, to try and convince her to bite him and kill him again, but she won't!

"I have no idea what'll be happening in MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE, so I can't tell you anything about that, it's an issue-by-issue book.

"There may be an art change in NOVA, *Carmine Infantino* may be coming on as regular artist. The first villain we're setting up is the Yellow Claw. The last time anybody saw him, he was escaping from Captain America. After that follows a one-shot villain, called Blackout. Then, a two-parter by *Sal Buscema*, co-starring the Thing.

"As for SPIDER-WOMAN, the second issue, which Carmine is drawing now, introduces Morgan La Fey, The Excaliber, and a new character whose name I haven't decided on yet—he's obviously into the occult, and also a S.H.I.E.L.D. agent who loves Spider-Woman. He may love her; he may not. With the third issue, they'll come to America (the first two take place in London, the MARVEL SPOTLIGHT opened on the Mediterranean, and all the MARVEL TEAM-UPs took place in England).



Spotlight on SPIDER-WOMAN

"The hard thing about SPIDER-WOMAN is catching a style for it. Archie's version established a concept, but not a character; he didn't have any room to do what he wanted because, at that time, it was a one-shot book. My challenge was in coming up with a character and making it work, based entirely on Archie's original character. There were several things that bothered me, and that bothered Archie, as well. One of them was that Spider-Woman (in MARVEL SPOTLIGHT #32), although created by the High Evolutionary, was obviously a spider.

"When I originally read it, I liked it, but to make a whole series out of working with a character who was basically just an evolved spider rubbed me the wrong way. Neither Archie nor Stan wanted to stay with that concept, either, so what I had to do was come up with something that didn't negate anything Archie had done, but find another way of explaining what he had meant.

"I think I did find it. It was very tricky. I added an awful lot of explanatory material, plus I had to set up a character and a style. The spider extract was given to her to counteract radiation. I've gone back to Stan's first story about the High Evolutionary. There is a section where he talks about finding this land with uranium in it, and building Wanda Gore. It's the uranium that effects the girl who becomes Spider-Woman. She doesn't know much of anything in many ways because, according to the story, she was six or seven years old when she was given the injection by her father and handed over to the High Evolutionary for safe-keeping. She didn't emerge from Wanda Gore for years. There's also something strange about her, women instantly don't like her, while men find something very compelling about her. I'm trying to do that subtly. It was probably the hardest script I've written in years."

Things happen fast around the mildly-'mazing Marvel Bullpen, and in the short few seconds between completion of this issue's "Department of InFOOMation" and the typing of this last minute page of final flashes, an awesome amount of ch-ch-changes have been effected! F'rinstance, CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND is now scheduled to appear as a full-size, full-color magazine in the same far-out format as the MARVEL COMICS SUPER SPECIAL that featured Kiss...except sans an article section. So watch for it, won't ya?!

And we've got some simply sensational Steve (Baby) Gerber news, too! It seems Steverino is stepping in to script the final spectacular chapter of the BLOODSTONE storyline in a forthcoming issue of THE RAMPAGING HULK, as well as being hard at work on a neat new LILITH story! And that's not all! There's even the possibility that he'll lend his authorial talents to a scintillatin' SHANNA story for our bombastic black-and-white mags, to boot!

Speakin' of the aforementioned RAMPAGING HULK, we've just gotta make mention of the fact that Happy Herb Trimpe is bouncin' back to illustrate a feature-length epic starring the big green behemoth he helped make famous! It's tentatively scheduled to appear in ish #8, so be sure to feast your eyes on the fabulous results!

And, still on the subject of the HULK, albeit the color comics version, this time, we also wanna draw your attention to an outasite extravaganza now in the making, courtesy of Lively Len Wein, Stellar Jim Starlin and Jumpin' Joe Rubenstein! As soon as Joe finishes rendering the artistic pencils of Jim, the story'll appear in the pages of the monthly HULK color comics mag! Wotta treat! Oh yeah, by the way, the title of this trippy feature is "Feeding Billy!" and it's a bombshell!

Offbeat items abound this time around, as Dauntless Don McGregor and Rich (Swash) Buckler collaborate on a colossal KA-ZAR story tantalizingly titled, "The Death Lovers!" As yet unscheduled, we'll be sure to let ya know when this enthusiastic effort will see print, and where. And while we're on the subject of the Dauntless One, we've just gotta give him a pandemonious plug for his first book of fantastic fiction, DRAGONFLAME & OTHER BEDTIME NIGHTMARES, now in print and available for $5 postpaid from Fictioneer Books, Ltd.; Lakemont, Georgia 30552. Take it from us, fellow FOOMers, the book is burstin' with the best blamed prose we've read in a good long while--and it's illustrated by Peerless Paul Gulacy, to boot! How can ya miss it?

On the mystic side of matters here at Marvel, Roger Stern(o) is the new scripter on DR. STRANGE, aided and abetted by Titanic Tom Sutton's eye-poppin' pencils and Earnest Ernie Chan's indescribable inks! They're doing wonders with the Master of the Mystic Arts, and even the jaded gang here in the ol' Bullpen was brain-blasted by their effervescent efforts! As for the stalwart Sutton, he's also doing some pencil-pushin' on the GHOST RIDER title, in conjunction with new scripter Ramblin' Roger McKenzie--who's tackling not just one, but two new titles, the other being the Man Without Fear, otherwise known as DAREDEVIL! Yup, it's true!

The down-to-earth adventures of the cosmic super-hero and Aree captain, MAR-VELL, are being illustrated by Pleasant Pat Broderick these days, and they're a wonder to behold! Meanwhile, Carousing Carmine Infantino is doing double-duty with a couple quick fill-in issues of none other than HOWARD THE DUCK! And, while we're on the web-footed subject of the fowl from beyond, we oughta mention that response to our announcement a couple issues ago that we still have a precious few copies of FOOM #15 still in stock (featuring Howard the Duck, natch, as well as an in-depth interview with his creator, Steve Gerber, and a plethora of other Duck paraphernalia) was met with ecstacy on the part of FOOMers everywhere...so we're gonna repeat that offer again, just to give you late-comers a chance to get in on the fun! Copies of the aforementioned FOOM #15, the special HTD issue, are available for $1.25 postpaid from David Anthony Kraft, c/o Marvel Comics Group, 575 Madison Avenue, NYC 10022. Checks should be made payable to DAK, who bought a limited supply of copies out of his own pocket to provide for just such a contingency as this. Get 'em while they're hot, folks--a better bargain you won't find anywhere!

And, since that reminds us, we also wanna tell ya that, beginning with issue #2 of PIZZAZZ, Dave (the Dude) Kraft will be scripting the battle-torn TARZAN series featured in those pages and illustrated by Big John Buscema. That's also the selfsame periodical that features superb STAR WARS mini-stories by Rascally Roy Thomas and Humble Howie Chaykin, so check it out! It's a fun-tastic fantasy delight!

Well, much as we hate to meander to a close, that's all the news and notes fit to print from mighty Marvel for this ish. See ya soon--and remember, think FOOM!

FOOM FLASHES ! FINAL FOOM FLASHES !

Make way, mates! It's the—

FOOMtastic British Feature Page!

An unusual dose of upheaval is underway even now in our effervescent English editions, effendi! Indeed, in a surprise shuffling of comics across the waters, the wild weekly heretofore known as FURY is merging (as of ish #24) with our magnificent and long-lived MIGHTY WORLD OF MARVEL magazine! And that ain't all, Anglophiles!

In fact, fastidious fast-action fans can look forward to seeing the frankly fabulous FANTASTIC FOUR in their very own exclusive title, which will feature in each-and-every issue a complete cover-to-cover collection of "The World's Greatest Comic Magazine!" Yesirree! There'll be a brilliant balance of the old and new, too, because not only will this magniloquent mag always spotlight a contemporary FF comics adventure, fresh from the Original House of Ideas, but it'll also contain a complete FF classic in each self-same number! It's the best of both worlds — 'cause it's the latest and greatest in the Marvel Universe of overseas offerings!

But wait! There's more! The diabolical, devilish demon of the night is dancing back in a soon-to-be-scheduled spankin' new DRACULA weekly horror title! After all, if the vitriolic vampire could come back from the dead, so can his malevolent magazine!

As for the captivatin' CAPTAIN BRITAIN, he's currently under the dramatic direction of Jalopy-Cruisin' *Jim Lawrence,* who scripts in style, while Rampagin' *Ron Wilson,* Pulsatin' *Pablo Marcos* and Fervid *Fred Kida* illustrate with aplomb! The good cep'n continues to co-star in SUPER SPIDER-MAN, amidst a star-splashed selection of superb super-heroics!

Stay tuned to this space in issues to come, British boosters, for word of munificent new monthly titles in the making! 'Till then, cheers to ya, chaps!

NEXT ISSUE

Mighty Marvel meets the most masterful modern-day myths of all:

Tarzan of the Apes
AND
John Carter of Mars

A fantastic FOOM focus on—

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It's a bombastic bonanza for Burroughs buffs!

* * *

Plus: more exclusive inside info and behind-the-scenes buzz on the bashful-but-bombastic Bullpen, as well as the usual plethora of photos, facts, features—and even *more* goodies galore!

* * *

All in the titanic *20th* anniversary ish of FOOM, the fan magazine for the *Friends Of Ol' Marvel!*

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